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FRAGMENTS OF PROSE AND POETRY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

HUMAN PERSONALITY

AND ITS SURVIVAL OF BODILY DEATH

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FRAGMENTS OF PROSE & POETRY

BY

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS 1843–1[illegible]

EDITED BY HIS WIFE

EVELEEN MYERS

99176

WITH PORTRAITS

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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PREFACE

THIS volume contains some fragments of prose and poetry written by my husband during a period of many years, and on divers subjects; — as such it cannot but appear to a certain degree heterogeneous and disconnected. And yet the singleness of purpose and steadfastness of endeavour which are shown throughout will, I think, give it a sufficient unity in the eyes of those who have sympathised with the author's aspirations or shared his hopes.

My husband did not wish the autobiographical chapters at the beginning of this volume to appear until three or four years after his death. A few passages have been omitted from them on account of their references to people still living, but on the other hand, the chapters have been supplemented by various letters, which bring out their true significance and illustrate the progress of the author's earnest thought, from the early years of childhood down to the very last moments of his life upon this earth.

There remain many beautiful letters of my husband's both to myself and to friends. These letters I have collected, and some day they may

possibly be printed, but they are of too personal a nature for present publication.

I would take this opportunity of thanking all those who have communicated to me letters of my husband's, and of saying how deeply grateful I should be to any one who, possessing further correspondence, would be willing to entrust it to my care to make such use of it as might hereafter seem good.

Of the poems which follow, a few have appeared already in a small volume, which was published in 1870, and has for a long time been out of print; some have been collected from the *Saturday Review* and the *Nineteenth Century* with the kind permission of the Editors, but the greater number have not yet been given to the public. The obituary notices have hitherto been scattered among the numbers of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research;* for permission to reprint them I wish to express my gratitude to the Council of the Society.

I am also greatly indebted to Messrs. Macmillan for allowing me to include some of the early poems.

EVELEEN MYERS.

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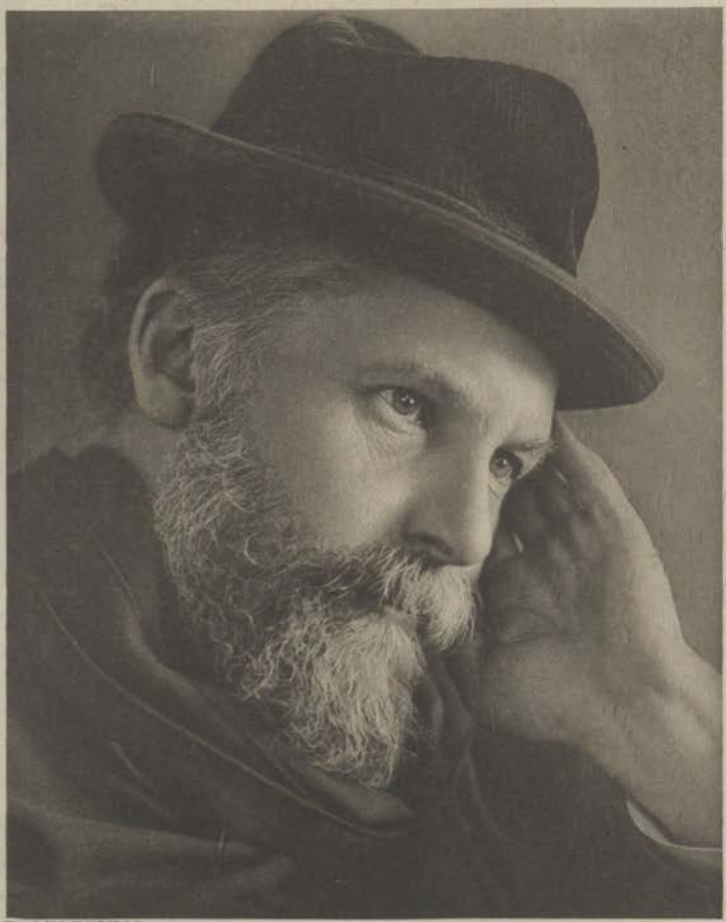


By Mrs F. W. H. Myers.

Edmund W. H. Myers.

FRAGMENTS OF INNER LIFE

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE AND EDUCATION

I BELIEVE that we live after earthly death; and that some of those who read these posthumous confidences may be among my companions in an unseen world. It is for this reason that I now address them. I wish to attract their attention and sympathy; I wish to lead men and women of like interests but of higher nature than my own to regard me as a friend whose companionship they will seek when they too have made their journey to the unknown home. I am tempted, of course, to try to make myself appear worthy of love and respect. But I am kept in check by another belief. I hold that all things thought and felt, as well as all things done, are somehow photographed imperishably upon the Universe, and that my whole past will probably lie open to those with whom I have to do. Repugnant though this thought is to me, I am bound to face it. I realise that a too great discrepancy between my account of myself and the actual facts would, when detected, provoke dis-

gust and contempt. This unusual check, I say, I strongly feel; but my readers must estimate for themselves how far even such a check can be relied upon to counteract man's tendency to paint himself in too bright a hue.

In one minor point, at least, I can be sincere, at the cost of exciting the distaste of severer critics. I can tell my story in my own style; I can give my impressions as they veritably come to me, without translating them into the language of a scientific memoir. The reader need not suppose that I expect his admiration. But if he on his part be psychologically minded, he will prefer that idiosyncrasy should not be concealed. If he is to be interested at all, it must be in the spectacle of a man of sensuous and emotional temperament, urged and driven by his own personal passion into undertaking a scientific enterprise, which aims at the common weal of men. This fusion of a minor poet and an amateur *savant* may not sound promising; but new crises make new needs; and what has been accomplished did in fact demand,—among many nobler qualities contributed by better men,—that importunate and overmastering impulse which none can more fiercely feel than I.

For it has been my lot to be concerned in a work more important and more successful than anything in my own capacity or character could have led me to expect. I have been one of the central group concerned in a great endeavour; the endeavour to pierce, by scientific methods, the world-old, never-penetrated veil. The movement which took overt

shape in 1882, with the formation of the Society for Psychical Research, was aided indeed by help from other quarters, but in its essential character was the conception of a few minds, and was piloted through its early dangers by a small group of intimate friends. With this endeavour to learn the actual truth as to the destiny of man I have from the very first been identified and, so to say, incorporate. Edmund Gurney worked at the task with more conscientious energy; the Sidgwicks with more unselfish wisdom; but no one more unreservedly than myself has staked his all upon that distant and growing hope.

I must begin—if only as a psychologist—with a few words on my descent. My paternal grandfather, Thomas Myers, LL.D.,—author of two ponderous folios on Geography,—was the son of Robert Myers, of Hovingham, near York. The name is old-established in the West Riding of Yorkshire; and there is no reason to suppose that it indicates Jewish descent. My paternal grandmother, Anna Maria Hale, was of good Irish family;—her fifth ancestor, a certain Sir W. Gilbert, of Kilminchy, who died in 1654 and left a large family, enlivening her pedigree with very varied alliances. Her great-grandfather was the Rev. Dr. John Hale, "Rector, Chancellor, and Treasurer of Dromore." My father, the Rev. Frederic Myers, was the second son of Thomas Myers, his elder brother, Thomas, being also in orders.

My maternal grandfather, John Marshall, of Headingley, Leeds, and of Hallsteads, Cumberland, M.P. for Yorkshire before the Reform Bill of 1832,

and founder of the flax-manufacture at Leeds, was a man of high character and of much note in his day. He, as well as my maternal grandmother, a Pollard, was descended from Yorkshire families of old standing, but varied fortunes. Jeremiah Marshall purchased Low Hall, near Halifax, in 1684,—just about the time when William Pollard inherited an estate at Wyke, near Bradford; and the two families (already interlinked through Leaches and Garths) met in 1795 in a happy marriage, from which were born five sons and six daughters. Three of the sons sat in Parliament; of the daughters one died unmarried; the others married the first Lord Monteagle, Dr. Whewell (Master of Trinity College, Cambridge), Colonel Temple, the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott, and the Rev. Frederic Myers.

Whatever qualities inhere in Yorkshire squires and yeomen I certainly ought to possess. Yet neither in body nor in mind do I closely resemble any ancestor of whom account remains. My mother's strong love of poetry and of natural scenery,—her family were among Wordsworth's most appreciative friends,—has descended to me; and the deep religious feeling of both my parents shows itself, perhaps, in my own less simple-hearted, less high-minded, but not less eager pre-occupation with unseen things.

My father (of whom, as well as of my grandfather, an account will be found in the "Dictionary of National Biography") was a clergyman who both in active philanthropy and in speculative freedom was in advance of his generation. His main work, "Catholic Thoughts," was in his lifetime only privately

printed, owing to his fear of disturbing the faith of others. It was published some thirty years after it was written,—and *then* was regarded as on the whole conservative, and was found elevating and strengthening by many minds. Among my father's friends were Dr. Jowett, Arthur Stanley (afterwards Dean of Westminster), Frederick W. Robertson of Brighton, Dr. Harvey Goodwin (afterwards Bishop of Carlisle), and others of like stamp. He became incumbent of St. John's, Keswick, Cumberland, in 1838, and there I was born on February 6, 1843.

It was in the garden of that fair Parsonage that my conscious life began. *Ver illud erat.* The memories of those years swim and sparkle in a haze of light and dew. The thought of Paradise is interwoven for me with that garden's glory;—with the fresh brightness of a great clump and tangle of blush roses, which hung above my head like a fairy forest, and made magical with their fragrance the sunny inlets of the lawn. And even with that earliest gaze is mingled the memory of that vast background of lake and mountain; where Skiddaw —*οὐμὸς Κιθαιρών*—hid his shoulders among the clouds, while through them his head towered to heaven; and Causey Pike and Catbells, with the vale of Newlands between them, guarded that winding avenue into things unknown,—as it were the limitary parapet and enchanted portal of the world. Close to the Parsonage is Castlelet, a little hill from which Derwentwater is seen outspread, with Borrowdale in the distance. I can recall the days when that prospect was still one of mysterious glory; when

gleaming lake and wooded islands showed a broad radiance bossed with gloom, and purple Borrowdale wore a visionary majesty on which I dared scarcely look too long.

From this setting stand out my first marked grief, my first startling joy,—each of them predictive of much to follow. The first grief which I remember came from the sight of a dead mole, which had been crushed by a cart-wheel in the Borrowdale road. Deeply moved, I hurried back to my mother, and asked her whether the little mole had gone to heaven. Gently and lovingly, but without doubt, she told me that the little mole had no soul, and would not live again. To this day I remember my rush of tears at the thought of that furry innocent creature, crushed by a danger which I fancied it too blind to see, and losing all joy for ever by that unmerited stroke. The pity of it! the pity of it! and the first horror of a death without resurrection rose in my bursting heart.

My mother attests the accuracy of this recollection. In the next instance she recalls the facts, although my feelings were not spoken.

On my sixth birthday my father began to teach me Latin; and a few months later he gave me the First Aeneid of Virgil with an interlinear translation. The scene is stamped upon my mind; the ante-room at the Parsonage with its floor of bright matting, and its glass door into the garden, through which the flooding sunlight came, while I pored over the new revelation with awe-struck joy;—

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine læso;—

I can recall the reverent emotion with which I hung on the rhythm of that majestic line. The invocation of the Muse came to me as absolutely real and new; and the *quo numine læso* suggested mysteries of divinity on which I dimly feared to dwell. Not Aeneas himself felt his own piety with such emotion as I felt that *insignem pietate virum;* —but the task of carrying gods into Latium, and especially the keeping of Juno's carriage at Carthage, were incomprehensible by my childish Christianity.

I had a second shock of pain at seven or eight years old. My mother, who shrank from dwelling on the hideous doctrine of hell, suggested to me that perhaps men who led bad lives on earth were annihilated at death. The idea that such a fate should be possible for any man seemed to me appalling. I remember where I stood at the moment, and how my brain reeled under the shock. Strangely enough, much as I loved my father, and deeply as I was moved by his deathbed words, his death gave me no such anguish as this merely speculative suggestion.

My father died at the age of forty, in 1851, and left me and my two younger brothers to a mother who made our welfare the absorbing interest of her life. Her character was such as in each age in turn is attributed to "the old school,"—a character of strong but controlled affections, of clear intelligence, unflinching uprightness, profound religious conviction. Our debt to her is as great as that of sons to a mother can be. She wished to keep

her sons with her, and in 1856 went to live at Cheltenham, that we might attend Cheltenham College, at that time almost the only public school at which day-boys were not despised.

An extract from Mrs. Myers' diary is here quoted :—

I could not have believed that a child of eight years old could have given such sympathy and such comfort in deep sorrow as I had from Freddy. He has been so very dear and tender, watching my countenance; and if he saw me very sad, stealing up to me with a loving kiss; but it has seemed at times as if words were put into his heart expressly for me—so sweetly has he suggested thoughts of comfort.—He marked a little book of Christian Meditations and often repeated or read the passages that suited my grief.——Never shall I forget the fervour with which he broke out into the Hymn for All Saints' Day, when I was mournfully saying one Sunday—"*that* dear voice we shall never never hear again." "Oh yes, mamma, you *will*—it is *now* singing praises although we cannot hear the new song with our fleshly ear." And when we first entered this sad house, and I was overpowered with grief, he began with a full heart and trembling voice to repeat to me: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."—"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord."—"For He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole."

Once when I said: "there can never be joy again" —or something like it—Freddy said to me "you know God *can* do everything, and He might give us, just once, such a vision of Him as should make us happy

all our lives after."—There is such a deep impression made upon his own heart—and there is such *reality* now in his prayers and so much tenderness of conscience. May God grant me the grace I now, alas, so deeply need! Only by constant reference to Him, and asking for His guidance, can I take courage for the task before me.

The following letters from Dean Stanley are also of this period:—

CANTERBURY, *25th June* 1853.

MY DEAR FRED,—Perhaps you have forgotten a walk over the mountains at Keswick with your dear father and mother, in which you were asked what you wished me to bring you back from the East, and you answered "a lily from Palestine."

Since that time much has happened to both of us; and the journey to the East which I then hoped to make in a few weeks has been delayed for four years.

But it has been at last accomplished, and you will see that I have not forgotten my promise.

Here is a lily from Palestine. I am not sure that it is exactly that kind of which our Lord spoke—but it is the only kind that I saw—and I brought it from the only place where I saw any such growing.

As it cannot tell its own story, I must tell it on its behalf

If you look on the map, you will see that the Jordan, after leaving its sources at the foot of Mount Hermon, flows through a long and wide valley, first into the Lake of Merom, and then into the Lake of Gennesareth.

It was early in the morning, after pitching our

tents by the Lake of Merom, that we came to a beautiful spring called the Ain Mellalah—that is, the "Spring of Salt," on the western side of the valley which sends a stream of water clear as crystal into the Lake below.

Why it is called the "Spring of Salt" I cannot tell you; for it is as sweet and fresh as possible.

It is one of the many springs which water the whole valley of the Jordan from its source to its mouth; and which once made it "like the garden of the Lord"—and like "the land of Egypt"—when Abraham and Lot looked over it from the hills of Bethel.

There are several springs just like this which fall into the Lake of Gennesareth and also into the Dead Sea.

The one perhaps which you are most likely to know is the spring of Elisha, mentioned in the Books of Kings, and which is also the scene described in "The Talisman," where Sir Kenneth and Saladin met each other.

In some of these springs in the northern part of the valley, you will see the large pools of clear water which they form, filled with huge black buffaloes, which lie there like those of Latium, wallowing "all through the summer day."

These buffaloes are the real bulls of Bashan—the "unicorns," as they are sometimes called, of Sirius and Lebanon—and you meet them also wandering about the whole valley with their wild Arab drivers.

But in the clear mirror of the Spring of Mellalah there were none of these monsters,—the water was as bright and calm as possible,—and its tranquil surface was overspread by the large green leaves and bright yellow flowers of the only lilies that I saw in my whole journey.

One of our party who was always called by the Arabs the "Tall governor" from his great stature, good-naturedly stretched down his long arm from his horse and gathered for me this one, which I have brought safe home.

It looks very different now from what it was in that beautiful pool; but as I look at it, all the scene rises before me, and all the history which has passed round that spot.

I cannot say how old this lily may be—but its parents must have grown in the springs for ages.

They must have seen the wild buffaloes passing to and fro along the valley before Canaanite or Israelite had set foot on the banks of the Jordan; they must have caught the eyes of the two great hosts which met to fight on the shores of the little lake which lies below like one of the tarns of Cumberland, when Joshua came from the south and smote Jabin King of Hazor in the great battle beside "the waters of Merom."

They must have been there when the men of Dan passed up this valley in search of a place for their settlement, which they found at last by the side of the still more beautiful spring whence the Jordan itself issues under the oaks of Laish.

And lastly they must have been seen by our Lord Himself when He came along this valley into the village of Caesarea Philippi.

All these they must have seen—for no one passes along this road without stopping to drink or to water their horses and mules at this beautiful pool.

Therefore I think we may be sure that Christ was Himself there—and that lilies such as this were in His mind when He uttered these memorable words: "Consider the lilies of the field—they toil not, neither do they spin—and yet I say unto you

that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

There are few words in the Bible of which I should be more glad to remind you. For first they encourage you to go on with that study of flowers, and other like objects in nature, which for their own sakes are always a wholesome and excellent pursuit and pleasure—they show that it was a pleasure of which our Saviour Himself partook, and what He sanctioned must be good and right for us.

And secondly they tell you to go through life with a tranquil and even spirit, not troubling yourself over much about the morrow—but leaving the morrow to take care of itself—sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

He who so cared for the grass of the field, shall He not much more care for you?—Believe me to be ever yours truly, A. P. STANLEY.

My dear little Fred,
  How kind to remember
The guest whom you sped
  From your home last September.

Your flowers were all dead,
  But they bade me renew
My thoughts, little Fred,
  Of the hill where they grew.

The fine kettle-holder,
  All purple and red,
The more it grows older,
  Will tell me of Fred.

If I sat at the head
  Of your bright lake once more,
I would answer, dear Fred,
  To the best of my store.

But now you must ask
  Your good parents instead ;
So I finish my task,
  And say, good-bye, dear Fred.

To the best of my knowledge
  I have no more to say.
University Coliege,
  The 30th of May.

Yours affectionately,
ARTHUR P. STANLEY.

From his 8th to his 12th year the author was taught by the Rev. Cowley Powles from whom the three following letters were received :—

Letter from his schoolmaster, the
Rev. COWLEY POWLES

ELIOT PLACE, BLACKHEATH, S.W.,
1853.

MY DEAR FREDDY,—I only learnt this morning that the lists of History and Geography readings now going on with us have not yet been sent to you. I desired them to be sent ten days ago. I am glad you have written for them—and sorry to have been in any degree the cause of delay. I think you will be interested, on your return, in the History Class—and in our Shakespeare readings too.

I very often think of you—none of my pupils' faces are so welcome to me as yours, and I should have been glad if there had been no reason for your absence. But the weather has been so cold that I cannot help thinking of you at sunny Tor-

quay with satisfaction. I hope it is doing you good.

Offer my kind regards to Mrs. Myers, and believe me, dear Freddy,—Your sincere Friend,

R. COWLEY POWLES.

From the Same

1865.

MY DEAR FRED MYERS,—What a treat you have given me! That "bonne bouche" that came by this morning's post served to sweeten the flavour of three doses of Greek and Latin Grammar to my resentful palate. The moment I came to that *quanta mercede meorum* I saw what was in store for me—and read on and on delightedly to the end. Yours is certainly a very charming version. Are you lecturing at Trinity now?

Is it a mistake to suppose that you are elected to the Fellowship a year earlier than you thought likely—or as I understood was possible? If so, be sure that no congratulations you have received are more hearty than those I send.

Thank you for your kind thought of me.—Always, dear Fred Myers, very affectionately yours,

R. C. POWLES.

From the Same

1896.

MY DEAR FREDERIC MYERS,—If it were a pleasure to you to hear from me, I can assure you your letter to me has given me a thrill of enjoyment such as I have not known for many a day. It is

not—at least I hope not—that I think I deserve all that you so kindly say of me, but that it is simply delightful to feel oneself borne in affectionate remembrance after all these years by one for whom I care as I have *always* cared for you.

Very heartily do I echo your wish that we may meet where we shall be independent of time, and both be "scholars together" in a school of higher wisdom than here.

How I should like to see your boys, and *you* with them! If they learn as readily as their father did, teaching them must be a real pleasure. (I never shall forget your first introduction to Greek Iambics, I can see now your quick eager look as you followed the rendering of the Shakespeare line by line into almost literal Greek.)

My wife bids me thank you for your message, and sends very kindest regards.—Always affectionately yours, R. COWLEY POWLES.

About a year after the move to Cheltenham Mrs. Myers received this letter from Aubrey de Vere:—

CURRAH CHASE, ADARE,
22nd Nov. 1857.

MY DEAR MRS. MYERS,—I cannot help writing you just a line to tell you how very much struck I have been with some poems written by your boy Freddy, which your sister, Lady Monteagle, has shown me.

I do not exaggerate when I assure you that they seem to me far superior to *any* poetry written at so early an age that I have ever seen. I allude especially to the "In Memoriam" Poems, and the

additional Pictures for the "Palace of Art." In imagination, vigour of diction, and a certain artistic instinct, about them, they are very remarkable things indeed. The likeness to Tennyson, which is in manner, rather than in thought, is not unnatural and in no way derogates from the merit of the poems, as youthful genius *always* develops itself at first through a process of sympathetic admiration.

I am sending your son a volume of my old poetry: my new one I do not send, as it includes pieces with the religious tone of which you might not be in sympathy.—I need not tell you what a pleasure it is to have Lady Monteagle here.—Ever most truly yours, AUBREY DE VERE.

At sixteen I was sent on, first to a classical, then to a mathematical tutor, and at seventeen (far too early), I went up to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Elected Fellow and Classical Lecturer of Trinity in 1865, I resigned my lectureship in 1869, for the purpose of helping to start the new movement for the Higher Education of Women. In 1871 I accepted the temporary post of Inspector of Returns under the Education Department, and in 1872 I became a permanent Inspector of Schools. After inspecting in several London and country districts, I was appointed to the Cambridge district in 1875, and at the time of writing I still hold that post. Thus much for the external events—commonplace enough—of a life which owes such interest as it possesses to action and passion of a more inward kind.

CHAPTER II

HELLENISM

THAT early burst of admiration for Virgil of which I have already spoken was followed by a growing passion for one after another of the Greek and Latin poets. From ten to sixteen I lived much in the inward recital of Homer, Aeschylus, Lucretius, Horace, and Ovid. The reading of Plato's Gorgias at fourteen was a great event; but the study of the Phaedo at sixteen effected upon me a kind of conversion. At that time, too, I returned to my worship of Virgil, whom Homer had for some years thrust into the background. I gradually wrote out Bucolics, Georgics, Aeneid from memory; and felt, as I have felt ever since, that of all minds known to me it is Virgil's of which I am the most intimate and adoring disciple.

Plato, Virgil, Marcus Antoninus;—these, to speak summarily, are the three great religious teachers of Græco-Roman antiquity; and the teaching of Plato and that of Virgil are in the main identical. Other pathways have now led me to something like the creed which they foresaw; but it is still, and more than ever, the support of my life.

The discovery at seventeen, in an old school-

book, of the poems of Sappho, whom till then I had only known by name, brought an access of intoxicating joy. Later on, the solitary decipherment of Pindar made another epoch of the same kind. From the age of sixteen to twenty-three there was no influence in my life comparable to *Hellenism* in the fullest sense of that word. That tone of thought came to me naturally; the classics were but intensifications of my own being. They drew from me and fostered evil as well as good; they might aid imaginative impulse and detachment from sordid interests, but they had no check for pride.

When pushed thus far, the "Passion of the Past" must needs wear away sooner or later into an unsatisfied pain. In 1864 I travelled in Greece. I was mainly alone; nor were the traveller's facts and feelings mapped out for him then as now. Ignorant as I was, according to modern standards, yet my emotions were all my own; and few men can have drunk that departed loveliness into a more passionate heart. It was the life of about the sixth century before Christ, on the isles of the Aegean, which drew me most;—that intensest and most unconscious bloom of the Hellenic spirit. Here alone in the Greek story do women play their due part with men. What might the Greeks have made of the female sex had they continued to care for it! Then it was that Mimnermus sang:—

> Τίς δε βιός, τί δὲ τερπνὸν ἄνευ χρυσέης Ἀφροδίτης;
> τεθναίην, ὅτε μοι μηκέτι ταῦτα μέλοι.

Then it was that Praxilla's cry rang out across the narrow seas, that call to fellowship, reckless and lovely with stirring joy. "Drink with me!" she cried, "be young along with me! Love with me! wear with me the garland crown! Mad be thou with my madness; be wise when I am wise!"

I looked through my open porthole close upon the Lesbian shore. There rose the heathery promontories, and waves lapped upon the rocks in dawning day; — lapped upon those rocks where Sappho's feet had trodden; broke beneath the heather on which had sat that girl unknown, nearness to whom made a man the equal of the gods. I sat in Mytilene, to me a sacred city, between the hill-crest and the sunny bay. I climbed to the summit of Syra,—

> More like a man
> Flying from something that he feared, than one
> Who sought the thing he loved.

For gazing thence on Delos and on the Cyclades, and on those straits and channels of purple sea, I felt that nowise could I come closer still; never more intimately than thus could embrace that vanished beauty. Alas for an ideal which roots itself in the past! That longing cannot be allayed; it feels "the insatiability which attends all unnatural passions as their inevitable punishment." For it is an unnatural passion; the world rolls onward, not backward, and men must set their hearts on what lies before.

I left Greece with such a sadness as I have known in some twilight sculpture-gallery, when I have pressed my face for the last time to the unanswering marble, and turned to go with eyes tear-brimming, and a bitter-sweet passion of regret.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIANITY

THE vanishing of the Hellenic ideal left me cold and lonely. I travelled in America in 1865, and during that time alone in my life felt a numb indifference to both past and future. One scene comes back to me with vivid insight into a state of mind which for the most part I have observed only from the outside.

Visiting Niagara alone, I resolved to swim across the river immediately below the falls, in the track where boats cross with ease, before the turmoil of the river collects itself for the rapids below. This was before any of the professional exploits in swimming Niagara; and my proposed swim, which would of course be thought nothing of now, had seldom if ever been attempted, so far as I could learn, except by deserters from the Canadian shore, some of whom were said to have been swept down and drowned in the whirlpool. There was thus some imaginative sense of danger; though it was plain that where a rowing-boat with one oarsman could ply, an ordinary swimmer ought to be able to make his way also. I started from the Canadian side (August 28th, 1865) late at night, to avoid spectators, and alone, except for a man following with my clothes in a boat. As I

stood on a rock, choosing my place to plunge into the boiling whiteness, I asked myself with urgency, "What if I die?" For once the answer was blank of emotion. I have often looked back on this apathy in the brief interspace of religions as my only subjective key to the indifference which I observe in so many of mankind. I plunged in; the cliffs, the cataract, the moon herself, were hidden in a tower of whirling spray; in the foamy rush I struck at air; waves from all sides beat me to and fro; I seemed immersed in thundering chaos, alone amid the roar of doom.

I emerged on the American side, and looked back on the tossing gulf. May death, I dimly thought, be such a transit, terrifying but easy, and leading to nothing new? *Cœlum non animum mutant* may be true of that change as well.

It was soon after my return to England that I underwent the new conversion which in my then state was sure to overtake me. I had been piously brought up, and although I had long neglected, had never actually cast off the Christian faith. But I had never as yet realised that faith in its emotional fulness; I had been "converted" by the Phaedo, and not by the Gospel. Christian conversion now came to me in a potent form—through the agency of Josephine Butler, *née* Grey, whose name will not be forgotten in the annals of English philanthropy. She introduced me to Christianity, so to say, by an inner door; not to its encumbering forms and dogmas, but to its heart of fire.

My poems of "S. Paul" and "S. John the Baptist,"

intensely personal in their emotion, may serve as sufficient record of those years of eager faith.

In the letters which follow Mr. Ruskin alludes to these poems:—

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD.

MY DEAR MYERS,—I cannot tell you how grateful I am for the writing of that noble poem, though I cannot understand how you could have known so much of Death, and of the power of its approach, in your fervid youth,—and though I—in spite of all you and other very dear friends have taught me, feel too fatally the terror still.—But it is partly a help to know that one does not work in the shadow alone.

Yes, I can come to Cambridge at the time you ask me—say the last day of this month—staying over the Sunday. I have been greatly pained by reading some of Miss R——'s "Spiritism" and need some help from nobler hands.—Ever affectionately yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

OXFORD.

MY DEAR MYERS,—I am *very* grateful for and infinitely surprised by your letter. It is a comfort and strength to me in extreme weakness of soul.

The surprise being that in this weakness, I am able to give you the pleasure you tell me of.

My own feeling is always that the things of which I try to show the force are open to every one who will look at them—and that my own work is merely a dog's quartering a field, and that the very game I put up is not for me; and I don't expect anybody to care for me ever.

I mean that being sure there is a spiritual world, I am so poor hearted and cold that I never think I shall get to it: but I may show the path. It makes me hope better of myself ever so much, that *you* were happy with me. I ought to have written to have thanked you for all things and to be remembered to all the friends that showed themselves so friendly —very especially to Mr. Stewart and very earnestly to all.

It is late—and I am weary and cannot say what I would; but I am ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

To H.R.H. PRINCE LEOPOLD,
DUKE OF ALBANY.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD,
Shortest Day, 1872.

SIR,—I have been in London during the last seven days, and though your Royal Highness's kind letter came to me, there, I was afraid to send for the book lest any mischance should come to it, and have only been able to look at it to-day.

But now, much more than most books, I have looked at and learned from it. I am very heartily glad to know that your Royal Highness likes it—but it seems strange to me; you are very happy—in being enough sad to enter into the feeling of these poems—already. The "John Baptist" seems to me entirely beautiful and right in its dream of him. The "St. Paul" is not according to my thought,—but I am glad to have my thought changed. I wish the verses were less studiously alliterative, but the verbal art of them is wonderful.

Some of the minor poems are the sweetest of their kind I ever read—Wordsworth with a softer chime.

I wish I had something adverse to say, for this

note must read to you as if I only wanted to say what would please you. That is indeed true—but I should neither hope, nor attempt to do so by praising what I did not like.

I will venture, unless I receive your Royal Highness's command to the contrary, to keep the book until your return to Oxford, when I hope you will find some occasion of enabling me to show how truly I am your Royal Highness's very grateful and loyal servant, JOHN RUSKIN.

At this time the following letters were written to a friend and contemporary:—

May 5, 1865.

MY DEAR C.,—I am well aware that in such controversy as we had at R—— I, when defending Christianity, was uniformly defeated, and I have no expectation, even if I knew all about the arguments on both sides, instead of being as ignorant as I am, that I should find much good result from that sort of reasoning; but I cannot resist writing to say that the moral evidence in favour of Christianity becomes, immediately the will is thoroughly subjected, quite overwhelmingly strong. I,—even I, wretched and half-hearted beginner as I am, can almost say already that I *know* the thing is true. How do I know? How do I know that Virgil is a great poet? I cannot prove it to J——, and yet how absolutely I see his deficiency.

How do you know that Bach was a great musician? you cannot prove it to me and yet how clearly you feel that it is I who have a sense wanting, not you who have subjective fancies on the subject.

I know to what extent I can resist temptation of

my own strength of will under every variety of circumstances. And I am beginning to know in an equally unmistakable manner what it is to have a strength not my own inspired into me, as I believe, by the Holy Spirit of God.

You cannot say that your critical analysis *disproves* Christianity. It merely fails to prove it on external grounds. The Gospel of John, for instance, Rénan supposes genuine, though untrustworthy, Strauss (if I mistake not), a 2nd century compilation. You cannot say that criticism is conclusive against the Gospel of St. John, as it is against the letters of Phalaris.

If the grand initial difficulty of believing that God became man was got over I believe the difficulties of detail would be far from invincible.

And that grand initial difficulty is to certain persons, to certain states of mind, the greatest argument in favour of the religion. Who is right?

Consider that if the thing is true for one person it is true for another, if it is true for me it is true for you.

No threats need be held out as to the consequence of disregarding it if true.

The more thoroughly you feel that love is everything that matters, the more would it agonise you with shame if once you thought that you had possibly been rejecting such love as the Gospels tell of.

Nothing on earth would rejoice me so much as your conversion. Great heavens, what a prospect! Leagued on earth with all those whose love is best worth having, in a bond closer than any freemasonry, enrolled among the countless species of one genus

> "All with foreheads bearing *lover*
> Written above the earnest eyes of them,"

and after death—! and all this, as I believe, to be had merely for the asking, surely this is God!—
Your very affectionate, F. W. H. M.

MY DEAR C.,—As to feeling hypocritical, one must not mind that, but remember that every one is to be measured by his very noblest, and not only that, but by the noblest which his noblest *hints at* as possible for him.

As to how to get to higher stages, I believe the possible process to be infinite and adaptable to every variety of character. I certainly have been favoured in a way which sometimes makes me almost murmur against the justice of God in the reverse way to which men usually do—I mean I have been so much too well treated;—but perhaps nothing less would have served to reclaim me, and the splendid generosity of God considered my needs and not my deservings. Other revelations I believe He has, fit for other sinners. I notice that all who have come to Him thank Him for wonderful adaptations of His grace to their cases, and I doubt not you will find it the same. Only remember as you do that nothing is to be got without asking (NEQVE ENIM ANTE DEHISCENT), and that first of all a man must have from the torpor of a foul tranquillity his life *delivered into war.*

It certainly seems as if some were born nobler than others—*e.g.* I cannot but think, that to S—— and M—— the task must be much easier than to you or me; but after all these differences are small in comparison. The man who found the treasure hid in the field did not care whether he had half-a-crown in his pocket or two pence.—Yours ever,

F. W. H. M.

That faith looks to me now like a mistaken short-cut in the course of a toilsome way. But it brought with it much of elevating emotion—much which survived the disappearance of the definite creed which gave it birth. I will recall one scene alone as a specimen of bygone ardours into which I still can live again.

I used constantly to go alone to the week-day afternoon services at King's College Chapel—services then attended by scarcely any one, and dimly lit by a few candles for the use of the choir. There in the gloom and vastness the soaring trebles sang. "When God heard this He was wroth"—the boys' clear passionless cry mounted through the dusky air:—

> "When God heard this He was wroth: and took sore displeasure at Israel;
> "So that He forsook the tabernacle in Silo: even the tent that He had pitched among men."

Swift came the antiphonal clauses, winged with the worship of a hundred generations; with nothing left in them of individual or of purposive—a hieratic cry; but for that very reason carrying the continuity of man's long complaint, the age-long sense of nearness and removal, of dealings with a God afar. Like odours which touch early memories the phrases sank and rose, till heaven darkened behind the towering windows and night descended on the song. And last of all the organ quivered with thunderous sound; the echo of appeals immeasurably vaster than human voice or wail; as it were the mur-

murings of a World-soul, up-pent in caverns of the earth.

There is no need to retrace the steps of gradual disillusion. This came to me, as to many others, from increased knowledge of history and of science, from a wider outlook on the world. Sad it was, and slow; a recognition of insufficiency of evidence, fraught with growing pain. Insensibly the celestial vision faded, and left me to

> pale despair and cold tranquillity,
> Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
> Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

CHAPTER IV

AGNOSTICISM

THE process of disillusionment, I say, was slow; and in its course I passed through various moods of philosophical or emotional hope, which are reflected in "The Implicit Promise of Immortality," the "Ode to Nature," "Ammergau," and other poems written 1869–73. These hopes faded likewise from lack of evidence, and left me to an agnosticism or virtual materialism which sometimes was a dull pain borne with joyless doggedness, sometimes flashed into a horror of reality that made the world spin before one's eyes,—a shock of nightmare-panic amid the glaring dreariness of day. It was the hope of the whole world which was vanishing, not mine alone.

The following letter to his mother was written at this time:—

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I shall treasure your letter, received this morning, as a precious possession,—and it will give me happiness in after days, if I continue on this earth, to think that in these latter years we have drawn so very close together, and feel the essential unity of our inmost affections and hopes. In whatever way spiritual advancement may be destined to come to me, I desire it above all,—and feel assured that it is the only way which

can lead to the realisation and permanence of *any* lofty and satisfying faith.

Do not be anxious about earthly happiness for me;—I have nothing to complain of: my sorrows are of a kind which are common to the whole race.

Moreover I have really little fear but that most of my remaining years will be tranquil and fully occupied, and that some close affection will be raised up for me to make even this earth a home—

> The kindly nurse does all she can
> To make her foster-child her inmate man.

Possibly I may get home before the 20th. I will let you know later.—Always your loving son,

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

And in those days, when my own hope ran lowest, my zeal for other men ran lowest too. What could be done for them of more than momentary avail? In spite of earthly advantages,—even by reason (as I deemed) of superior insight,—I suffered more than they; was it not best for "the dim common populations" not to feel and not to know? In that foreseen futility of the life of individual and of race, sympathy itself seemed a childish trifling with the universal despair.

> O sighs that strongly from my bosom flew!
> O heart's oblation sacrificed anew!
> O groans and tears of all men and of mine!
> O many midnights prostrate and supine,
> Unbearable and profitless, and spent
> For the empty furtherance of a vain intent,—
> From God or Nothingness, from Heaven or Hell,
> To wrest the secret that they will not tell,
> To grasp a life beyond life's shrinking span
> And learn at last the chief concerns of man!

FRAGMENTS OF INNER LIFE

An entry in my diary for November 13th, 1871, "H.S. on ghosts," indicates the first turning of my spirit towards the possible attainment, with Henry Sidgwick's aid, of a scientific assurance of unseen things. This last clue was destined to be followed far; nor could I have found a more sympathetic yet cautious guide. Tranquilly, seriously, he seemed to have passed through all intellectual experiences,—to know in every problem where the possible answers lay. He was a man who neither overrated the importance of any task which he found to do, nor shirked the doing of it for opposition of other men, but discerning clearly what measure of usefulness each effort might attain, he was persistent without eagerness and efficacious without enthusiasm. "I observed, too," says Marcus Antoninus of the philosopher Maximus, "that no man could ever fancy that he was despised by Maximus—or ever venture to think himself a better man."

The first scene in the long struggle consisted in the slow growth of resolve within me to spend all life's energy in beating against the walls of the prison-house, in case a panel anywhere might yield. To these wild hopes Sidgwick replied with modified encouragement. It was possible, he thought, that where the German had been satisfied with embracing the cloud—where the Frenchman's logic had lightly accepted negation — the dogged Anglo-Saxon might yet wrest some secret from silent Fate. "I will not let thee go until thou bless me!" — so cried I in spirit to that unanswering Shade;—"until at least thou show me some glimmer

of thy countenance, and eyes that live behind thy veil."

Yet I had at first great repugnance to studying the phenomena alleged by Spiritualists;—to re-entering by the scullery window the heavenly mansion out of which I had been kicked through the front door. It was not until the autumn of 1873 that I came across my first personal experience of forces unknown to science. I shall not, in this story of inward feelings, recount the special phenomena which impressed me. What I have to say on evidential points has been said elsewhere. Enough that I had discovered a hidden portal which might be pushed backwards upon an open way. *Limen erat, caecaeque fores;*—there was at last an adit into the Unseen. I know not whether at any other moment, or to any other man, this new hope could have come more overwhelmingly. It must be remembered that this was the very flood-tide of materialism, agnosticism,—the mechanical theory of the Universe, the reduction of all spiritual facts to physiological phenomena. It was a time when not the intellect only but the moral ideals of men seemed to have passed into the camp of negation. We were all in the first flush of triumphant Darwinism, when terrene evolution had explained so much that men hardly cared to look beyond. Among my own group, W. K. Clifford was putting forth his series of triumphant proclamations of the nothingness of God, the divinity of man. Swinburne, too, in "The Pilgrims" had given passionate voice to the same conception. Frederic Harrison, whom I knew well, was still glorifying Humanity as the only Divine.

And behind these exultant pioneers was a rearguard of steadier and sadder thought. George Eliot—on whose deep moral impressiveness I have dwelt elsewhere — strenuously rejected all prospect save in the mere terrene performance of duty to our human kin. And others,—all, it seemed, to whom I could look for wisdom,—maintained a significant silence, or fed with vague philosophisings an uncertain hope.

The following is a letter to George Eliot. Part of the reply is also given.

MY DEAR MRS. LEWES, — Our conversation of last Sunday has left me anxious to say a few words as to the belief in immortality; for I feel that I must have seemed to give an uncomprehending assent to what you said, and then to relapse into my former opinion.

The fact is that I so deeply admire all, and agree with most, of what you say on the matter that I cannot quickly find words which combine the expression of reverence for your teaching with the statement of a different view, to which my own experience of life has led me.

I entirely agree that the impulse to virtue should not depend on any hope of reward, and that since we find human life actually existing, and have no practical expectation of its being stopped by a general suicide, we are bound, however poor a thing life may be, to do all we can to improve it for our successors.

I think that to do this without any enthusiastic confidence in the result of happiness, even to those for whom we toil, is an act of heroic courage; and I

am deeply grateful for the opportunity which you have given me of trying to catch from you something of this spirit. But when I come to apply these principles I find an unexpected difficulty—I find that life may be rendered painful not only by faults and vices from which we may hope that our successors will be free, but also by the very elements which may be expected to gather strength, namely love and religious aspiration. I find that love in its highest—in its most spiritual—form is a passion so grossly out of proportion to the dimensions of life that it can only be defined, as Plato says, as "a desire for the eternal possession" of the beloved object,—for his or her ever-growing perfection and bliss; while removal by death, if no reunion be looked for, at once reduces this life to an act of endurance alone; and I find also that religious aspiration, reverence, worship (towards however unknown a God), tend to become the very aliment of what is truly life. Now if we can believe that any object for these feelings indeed exists, they are painful only from their intensity (*y muero porque no muero*), and have in them also an intermingling of the profoundest joy.

But if death be the end of all, I must consider these deep-seated instincts as a sad delusion—my sense of justice, my sense of mercy, will not permit me to reverence a Being, or to admire a system of forces, which brought into existence a world in which so many pure and sensitive creatures receive nothing but unmerited torture.

No happiness of my own, or of the mass of mankind, can excuse in my eyes the impotence or cruelty which looked on while these innocents perished.

If such be the scheme of things, I may try to be brave enough to do what I can to improve it, I may reverence those who have so tried before

me, but I must sweep away my instinct to *worship* as a dream, and again, it will be well if my moral nature does not narrow into endurance alone. I can hardly have the heart to wish that future men should be born with natures higher and more susceptible to love and reverence than my own, that they may endure in consequence a fruitless pain greater than I can know.

And yet I cannot wish for any creature that he should lack what I am forced to regard as the higher elements in myself.

The supposition that death ends all thus leaves me in a dilemma from which I see no escape.

All is made plain if you once allow to love and virtue their own continuance,—no reward consisting of anything except themselves,—no rest except in higher energies,—only "the glory of going on, and still to be."

I have come, on many grounds, to believe that this will be so. And if this *is* to be so, it is surely well that men should think often of it,—that life, so discrowned of glory, so poor and pitiable a thing at best, if it end in the grave,—should be often set forth, not indeed as the probation which earns beatitude, but as the watershed of illimitable destinies, the first step in an endless progress,—a progress to higher duties which will become joys in proportion as duty here has become our joy.

This is the message which I feel moved to deliver, and I earnestly desire so to conceive and present it as that it may not be out of moral harmony with those fuller tones in which you speak of a courage and a nobleness which I shall always gaze on from so far below,—tho' I may believe that there is to their attainment a yet more excellent way; and I am confident the day shall come when

you, splendidly deceived, shall stand in no shadow, but in very presence among the "choir invisible," —Yours always with grateful reverence,

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

"I have no controversy with the faith that cries out and clings from the depths of man's need.

"I only long, if it were possible to me, to help in satisfying the need of those who want a reason for living, in the absence of what has been called 'consolatory belief.'

"But all the while I gather a sort of strength from the certainty that there must be limits or negations in my own moral powers and life-experience which may screen from me many possibilities of blessedness for our suffering human nature.

"The most melancholy thought surely would be that we in our own persons had measured and exhausted the sources of spiritual good. But we know how the poor help the poor.

"I feel as if some foggy obstruction had been cleared away from my mind, since reading your letter, and strangely more contented, as if I had seen and joined hands with one whom I had missed on the way. — Believe me, always, yours most faithfully, "M. G. LEWES."

At George Eliot's Sunday receptions I now would sit in strange confusion of mind. I heard the eager talk, the race of intellectual novelties which so recently had seemed to myself also to range over all the field which fate allowed to men. But now I felt a knowledge almost greater than I could bear; a knowledge beside which the last experiment of the biologist, the last speculation of the

philosopher, seemed trifling as the sport of a child; and yet a knowledge which none would receive from me, an answer to which none cared to listen, although the riddle was at the heart of all.

I found little of real companionship in the small sect of Spiritualists, at that time almost the only seekers or transmitters of knowledge from a field far wider than they knew. With few exceptions, to be mentioned presently, these disappointed me rather than sustained. And those dearest to me—Sidgwick, Edmund Gurney,—met with a wisely cautious sympathy my eager joy.

And thus I moved through a strange panorama of scenes of solitary exaltation, of bewildering introduction into incommunicable things. Alone I felt the precursory throb and boding ground-swell of the great convulsion that must be. Strangely those scenes return to me, as if a part of some experience other than that of waking men. It might be a drive at dawn of day along the misty Vyrniew; the trees half seen in clinging vapour, the leaf-scented autumn chill, the sense of traversing ghostly mysteries and entering on a land unknown. Or Ludlow, clustered about the deep-cliffed river beneath a crimson sinking sun,—something of glowing and slumberous in earth and air, as of a city of the spirit-world. And always the consciousness that the hour at last had come; that the world-old secret was opening out to mortal view; that the first carrier-pigeon had swooped into this fastness of beleaguered men.

Yet it was my fortune to hear and speak of those

things in what was then the group best suited to my needs. Mr. and Mrs. Cowper-Temple (he was afterwards made Lord Mount-Temple) lived as Lord Palmerston's heirs at Broadlands, one of the stateliest of English homes. They had become convinced of the reality of spiritual intercourse, and through the Russell Gurneys (Mr. Russell Gurney, Recorder of London, was uncle to my friend) they came to know and to wish to help Edmund Gurney and myself. They introduced us to Stainton Moses, and met all our questionings with responsive search for truth. What hours of spiritual nurture have I lived through in the long drawing-rooms, from which beyond estrade and portico the broad lawns sloped in sunlight down to Test's crystal flow! Changeless those high souls seemed; living in the stream of an immortal existence they moved without shock or wandering upon a far-seen sacred goal. Changeless, without, the immemorial forest-trees and deep-shadowed isles of lawn, through which if some fair girl-guest chanced to wander, her beauty took something of sabbatical from the slow-moving stately day.

Et fors omne datum traherent per talia tempus, I have written in my diary against a visit to Broadlands:—"Perchance they might have lingered in such communing through all their fateful hour." But this repose came to me as a gleam of lucid evening through some stormy noon of day. It was not mine to tarry there; but to press forth to labours yet unfinished, and temptations not yet battled through.

Life, indeed, was still for my own soul confused and tossing, but the world's wider confusion seemed narrowing to a more definite issue. If there were indeed a progressive immortality, then were the known evil of the Universe so slight in proportion to infinity that one might trust in a possible explanation which should satisfy every soul. But if there were nothing after death, then no argument could reconcile the moral sense to the fact that so many innocent creatures were born to unmerited and unrequited pain.

CHAPTER V

THE FINAL FAITH

CLOSING here for the present this brief story of my inner life, I am bound to face one searching question. My history has been that of a soul struggling into the conviction of its own existence, postponing all else to the one question whether life and love survive the tomb. That conviction has at last been granted to me. How far has it proved an inspiring, a controlling creed? How has it compared with other creeds or absence of creed,—with Hellenism, Agnosticism, Christianity?

As years advance one must needs lose the early confidence in the possibilities of one's own moral progress. For me at least the walls of my earthly nature seem closing in. Nor can I believe that under any circumstances, with any stimulus, I could have become a being such as those whom I have most admired and loved. But although my character is ill fitted to illustrate the merits of any form of religion, it is well fitted to bring out that religion's defects. I am not likely to be a better man than my creed gives me logical reason for being.

The Hellenism of my early years was an intellectual stimulus, but in no way a moral control. Entirely congenial to my temperament, it urged me

onwards (as I have said) into intellectual freedom and emotional vividness, but exercised no check upon pride. Hellenism is the affirmation of the will to live,—but with no projection of the desired life into any juster or sterner world.

The effect of Agnosticism upon me was wholly evil. During this phase only can I remember anything of deadness and bitterness;—of scorn of human life, of anger at destiny, of deliberate preference of the pleasures of the passing hour.

Christianity, while it could last, was enough. Its drawback was the growing sense of unreality, of insufficiency; the need of an inward make-believe. The Christian scheme is not cosmical; and this defect is felt so soon as one learns to look upon the universe with broad impersonal questioning, to gaze onward beyond the problem of one's own salvation to the mighty structural laws on which the goodness or badness of the Cosmos must in the last resort depend.

Yet I cannot in any deep sense *contrast* my present creed with Christianity. Rather I regard it as a scientific development of the attitude and teaching of Christ.

The following extract will serve to illustrate the author's meaning:—

You ask me what is the moral tendency of all these teachings—the reply is unexpectedly simple and concise. The tendency is, one may say, what it must inevitably be;—what the tendency of all vital moral teaching has always been—the earliest truest tendency of Christianity itself. It is a reassertion—

weighted now with new evidence—of Christ's own insistence on inwardness, on reality:—of His proclamation that the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life: of His summation of all righteousness in sheer Love to God and man.

As my work advances, it seems to me that under this new scheme there is a redistribution of ancient stimuli: I know not whether in reality there is less of fear, but at any rate there is a far stronger appeal to the strength-giving hope of joy. That hope was vague and feeble for the mass of men: it was expressed in unreal terms, and there was no hint or promise of increased capacity of enjoyment.

A change is dawning now. We are beginning to conceive not only the deliverance from extinction or from misery, but the various stages of subsequent delight. And the time has come when we can realise that each illation of spiritual energy is accompanied for us by a specific joy.

Even the joy of youth, as Wordsworth has proclaimed, may in truth lie not so much in the mere organic freshness and pulsation as in those "first affections" which seem the traces of antenatal being.

Strangely enough, a new joy, resembling the joy of youth, has even now by these new experiments been introduced among mankind. I mean the joy of hypnotic repose and renewal; the regenerative self-suggestion when the nerve system "comes again as a little child," and an influx of energy from perennial springs has revivified the outworn flesh.

Of all emotions the passion of love is that which brings the intensest joy of exalted vitality—and I believe it is no mere metaphor which describes Love as the characteristic energy of the spiritual world.

Joy, then, I will boldly affirm, is the aim of the

Universe;—that Joy which is the very bloom of Love and Wisdom;—and men's souls need attuning to that inconceivable delight. It is reported that a spirit's encounter with another spirit higher than itself generates inevitably that feeling which on earth we know when the shock of some pure passion has whelmed all sense of the body in one selfless and pervading love. Strangely akin to this, moreover (as Plato knew), is the soul's shock and sense of consummation when even on earth she receives within her some majestic and vivifying truth.

The true stimulus to earthly endeavour must thus in the end consist in a sense of the difference in degrees of joy to which the soul may attain. We need, on a higher level still, some conception like our present memory of the gulf between moments of exalted love and moments of sensual passion; between moments of illuminating insight and moments of such diversion as the crowd desires. Even to us the gulf between the higher and the lower pleasures will often seem wider than the gulf between those lower pleasures and sheer disgust or pain. And what possible limit can we assign to the expansion of the noblest joys? The rapture of knowledge must heighten as the Cosmos opens more profoundly on our view; the oneness of spirits must be ever more interpenetrating as those spirits bring to the marriage a more eager and incontaminate fire.

As I work away at my book I feel that when the actual evidence has been given, my duty at first sight seems to be at an end. Nay, it would seem that to add anything to the evidence, to embark upon any imaginative picturings of an unprovable future, would merely weaken the force of what has been already advanced. Better let each man draw for

himself such inferences, — shape for himself such fancies as to the unseen world as the solid fact of proved survival may suggest to him.

Under any ordinary circumstances this argument would be irrefutable. In any investigation of purely scientific facts for purely scientific ends the half would here be better than the whole;—the demonstrable and conceivable half to the undemonstrable and scarcely conceivable whole.

But this inquiry—however earnestly I endeavour to keep it thoroughly scientific in tone and method, —must inevitably be,—not something less, but something more. All inward reflections and experiments lead me to the conclusions that man's whole conception of the unseen must be deepened and widened; —and in such a work as this I must evoke response of many kinds:—not only that which follows with due adhesion the stages of a blackboard proof, but that which wells deeply up from the inward recognition of a power outside ourselves.

Nor can the shaping of an unseen future be safely left to the imagination of men. No department of human speculation has been more barren or more barbarous than this;—from the vague emptiness of the conventional heaven to the endless tortures which make the Cosmos the fabrication of a fiend.

How different the aspect which the whole picture assumes as soon as we attempt to apply to it those principles of continuity and evolution which are our main guides in any transition from a known part of the universe to an unknown!

Even in this world,—much more, we must suppose, in the next,—it is spiritual progress which is the only true reward.

The capital which we amass on earth, and carry

beyond earth, consists in certain heightening capacities of giving and receiving joy, in certain ever closer companionships with ever nobler souls.

I look upon Christ as a Revealer of immortality absolutely unique, as the incomparable Pioneer of all wisdom that shall be learnt concerning unseen things. But, like the Norseman's discovery of America, his work grows more and more remote, and there are no sure sea-marks for others to follow along that legendary way. A new discovery is needed,—to be made by no single Columbus, but by the whole set and strain of humanity; by the devotion of a world-wide labour to the deciphering of that open secret which has baffled the too hasty, or too self-centred, wonder and wish of men. And such an inquiry must be in the first instance a scientific, and only in the second instance a religious one. Religion, in its most permanent sense, is the adjustment of our emotions to the structure of the Universe; and what we now most need is to discover what that cosmic structure is.

I believe, then, that Science is now succeeding in penetrating certain cosmical facts which she has not reached till now. The first, of course, is the fact of man's survival of death.

The second is the registration in the Universe of every past scene and thought. This I hold to be indicated by the observed facts of clairvoyance and retrocognition; and to be in itself probable as a mere extension of telepathy, which, when acting

unrestrictedly, may render it impossible for us to appear as other than we are. And upon this the rule of like to like seems to follow; our true affinities must determine our companionships in a spiritual world.

And finally, extending to that world the widest law thus far found applicable to the world we know, I believe in a progressive moral evolution, no longer truncated by physical catastrophes, but moving continuously towards an infinitely distant goal. This short creed, I think, is all that existing evidence warrants; and is enough for the needs of life. It proves to me that it is to my interest to live at my best; it inspires the very strongest hopes which can excite to exertion. On many men, I feel sure, it will exercise a more striking effect. And be it noted that whatever effect this creed does exercise it will exercise inexorably and persistently;—with the inexorable persistence of known and permanent fact. Nay, since there is this *reality* in the creed, it will be most powerful in those profoundest crises when any inward uncertainty of belief leaves the victory to the passions of men. I have myself thus found that in strenuous need the efficacy of my belief has become not less but greater.

I have been speaking as though these convictions admitted of no doubt. And I believe that they will attain such certitude in the minds of coming men. But my own career has been a long struggle to seize and hold the actual truth amid illusion and fraud. I have been mocked with many a mirage, caught in

many a Sargasso Sea. For there has been this of unique about my position, that from no conceit of my own capacity, but in the bitter need of truth, in the manifest dearth of allies and teachers, I have felt that I must absolutely form my own judgment as to man's survival; must decide from facts known to myself—known hardly to any others, or interpreted by those others in some different way. I could not attach much importance to any opinions except those of the Sidgwicks and Edmund Gurney. Who else knew what was to be known—in its strength and its weakness?

I had therefore often a sense of great solitude, and of an effort beyond my strength;—"striving," —as Homer says of Odysseus in a line which I should wish graven on some tablet in my memory —"striving to save my own soul, and my comrades' homeward way."

Αρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

On March 13th, 1880, I was married by Dean Stanley,—an old friend of my father's—in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster Abbey, to Eveleen, youngest daughter of the late Charles Tennant, of Cadoxton, Neath, Glamorganshire, and Mrs. Tennant, daughter of Admiral Collier.

. . . . . .

In 1881 we took up our abode in Leckhampton House, built by me on the western edge of Cambridge, and there three children were born to us.

. . . . . .

Two letters to his mother, and a fragment of a letter to a friend, are here inserted :—

Leckhampton House, Cambridge,
Dec. 2, 1886.

My dear Mother,—A word of loving greeting for your birthday! May the years which remain to you here be tranquil and painless for yourself! Full of comfort and help to others they are sure to be, while strength to help and cheer remains to

you. And before long, what a new *birthday* awaits you! the thought of which gives a solemn serenity to the closing years of life. I am thankful to think that infirmities do not quickly increase, and that we may have good hope of keeping you yet long among us. And I am very glad that you have not been letting yourself be worried! Your health and peace are so much more important than any of the bothering things, that it is a pity that they should *ever* keep you awake. Indeed my own happiness has grown and deepened till one doubts whether it can be good for one to drink such deep and continuous draughts of it; and one fears lest it be taken from one. All one can do is to maintain a spirit of deep thankfulness and a sense of the responsibility which is laid on one by so much of blessing.—Ever your loving son,

F. W. H. MYERS.

To the Same

MY DEAR MOTHER,—One line of thanks for your birthday wishes. Certainly each year makes home ties and home affections dearer to me, and especially makes me feel more deeply how unique and irreplaceable a thing is a mother's love.

If it were not that I most fully trust that any separation between us can only be for a few years, I do not know how I could bear the prospect of losing such a love, as life goes on; but as it is I feel that the prospect of immortality will enable me to receive with sorrow unmixed with bitterness whatever loss may in the future be ordained for me.

Arthur's illness brought such thoughts very near, —but there I hope we have been spared the blow. —Ever your loving son, F. W. H. MYERS.

To a Friend

Thank you very much for your letter. It exactly hits our mood of mind in this solemn moment.

Both to my mother and to myself, from somewhat different stand-points, the future life is so certain, and the goodness of God and the Universe a matter of such profound trust, that a transition from this world to that—unless where a life and work seems interrupted, or some survivor is left forlorn—cannot in itself seem a cause for mourning. My thoughts are not of his *death*, but of his life;—of his life *now* and in the endless future: — and also of all that was brightest and most unclouded in his past earth-life.—Yours affectionately,

F. W. H. MYERS.

The two following passages are from letters written to a friend in 1900:—

I was sent abroad for the winter after an attack of influenza, but am now nearly all right again and busily occupied with a big book of some 1200 octavo pages, which I don't expect anybody to read, but am writing for the satisfaction of my own conscience. My researches have at any rate made *me* very happy, and I want to make as many other people follow the same line of happiness as I can; though we are all booked for such a good thing in the *next* world that it matters comparatively little how we fare in *this*.

As for myself;—I have mainly to report a constantly deepening happiness. . . .

When after death *you* enter on the endless and unimaginable happiness which I confidently anticipate for you,—probably in even fuller measure than for myself—you must give me the pleasure of coming up to me and saying, "Well, you told me of this when I hardly ventured to believe it!" I will send you one or two short papers, one of them about Henry Sidgwick not yet printed, — which will somewhat explain what I say.—I am, always, yours affectionately, F. W. H. MYERS.

And now the earthly scene, charged erewhile with much solemn sadness, has changed like the scene within.

All that lies around me breathes beauty and repose. The evening sun gilds this fair garden; the children play like leverets on the lawn; from my window I see quiet tilth and pasture beyond a girdling belt of flowers.

. . . . . .

I am well aware that my temper is in disaccord with that of Buddha, of Cleanthes, of Marcus Antoninus. This "passionate affirmation of the will to live" as Schopenhauer would call it, which makes the essence of my being, seems far from that lofty resignation which subordinates all thoughts of a personal future to the welfare of the Universe as a whole.

I might reply that my private temper differs

because my cosmical outlook differs; because I see that the only hope for the Universe lies in that very thing which makes the only hope for me. The Universe cannot advance to moral glory over the crushing of individual hearts.

Yet I know that there is a difference more personal than this; I know that my nature imperatively craves what the nature of Marcus Antoninus did not crave,—a personal, an unbounded, an endless career of life and joy.

Yes, and I believe, as against all Stoic and Buddhist creeds, that this temper of mine, however much of chastening it still may need, may yet be that which best subserves the cosmic aim; which helps the Universe in its passage and evolution into fuller and higher life. To be purged, not dulled, is what we need; to intensify each his own being, a pulse of the existence of the All.

We need, as I have elsewhere said, a summons "to no houri-haunted paradise, no passionless contemplation, no monotony of prayer and praise; but to endless advance by endless effort, and, if need be, by endless pain." Be it mine, then, to plunge among the unknown Destinies, to dare and still to dare!

Meantime the background of Eternity shows steadfast through all the pageants of the shifting world. This gives majesty to solitary landscapes, and to the vault of night; it urges me to go out and to be alone; to pace in starlight the solemn avenues, and to gaze upon Arcturus with his sons.

FRAGMENTS OF INNER LIFE

ON A SPRING MORNING AT SEA

And such a sight as this is, I suppose,
  Shall meet thee on the morrow of thy death;
And pearl to sapphire, opal into rose
  Melt in that morn no heart imagineth;—
Fair as when now thine eyes thou dar'st not close
  Lest the whole joy go from thee at a breath,
And the sea's silence and the heaven's repose
  Evanish as a dream evanisheth.
Ay, *there* some jewelled visionary spring
  Shall charm the strange shore and the glassy sea;
And from thee o'er some lucid ocean-ring
  Thy phantom Past shall in a shadow flee;
And thou be in the Spirit, and everything
  Born in the God that shall be born in thee.

And now let my last word be of reverent gratitude to the Unimaginable Cause of all; to whom my thanks ascend in ancient and solemn language, fuller, surely, of meaning now than ever heretofore throughout the whole story of the desires of men:—

The king shall rejoice in Thy strength, O Lord: exceeding glad shall he be of Thy salvation:
For Thou hast given him his heart's desire; and hast not denied him the request of his lips:
He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him a long life: even for ever and ever.

F. W. H. Myers.

Edmund Spencer

OBITUARY NOTICES

I

EDMUND GURNEY

1888

How great a loss the work of our Society, and all cognate work throughout the world, has sustained in the death of Edmund Gurney it would be difficult adequately to express. We can best discern it by reviewing what he had already done,—the six years' work of a man in the prime of life, from whom some score of further years of undiminished energy might not have seemed too much to hope. And some such brief account must clearly be attempted in these *Proceedings* of which he was the Editor;—for the hearing at least of this Society of which he was the indefatigable mainspring. The task, however, has difficulties of its own. Much of his work lies in a field still so subject to controversy that, while awaiting with confidence the world's ultimate verdict, we must beware of claiming as decisive achievement what many critics may still depreciate as mere mistaken endeavour. Much of his labour, too, was carried on in such close conjunction with other col-

leagues,—in a spirit of such entire postponement of any claims of his own to the interests of the common search for truth,—that it is not easy to disentangle the precise share of thought or discovery to which his mind has an exclusive title. Much work, however, remains which is indisputably valuable, indisputably his;—much work, and that of a quite other kind than an outside observer of his earlier years would have expected him to choose for the prime task of his maturity.

This is no place for a detailed account of his character, or for review of his literary achievements in other directions; but it would be impossible to explain either how he came to take up this special line of research, or how he came to succeed in it, without indicating in some few words in what sense his previous life had trained him for the task on which he entered at thirty-five years of age, in 1882.

Edmund Gurney's intellectual nature offered one of those cases, so to say, of double foci, of juxtaposed but scarcely reconciled impulses, which seem destined to become commoner as civilisation becomes more complex, and which, at whatever cost to the individual, are none the less essential for the progress, the unification of knowledge, if ever the emotions of the one half of the world are to become the science of the other. I mean that while his instincts were mainly æsthetic, his powers were mainly analytic. His dominant capacity lay in intellectual insight, penetrating criticism, dialectic subtlety. His dominant passion was for artistic, and especially for

musical sensation. For a long time it seemed as though, by some strange irony, Nature had heaped upon him gifts which he did not care to use, only to deny him the one gift of musical inventiveness—or even of executive facility—which would have satisfied his inborn, ineradicable desire. During all his boyhood, during all his college days, music was his strong preoccupation. Called upon to choose between classical and mathematical studies, he chose classics almost at hazard, and worked at them, one may say, in the intervals of his practice on the piano. In spite of this divided interest, and of a late beginning—for he came up to Cambridge ill-prepared—his singular acuteness in the analysis of language, his singular thoroughness in leaving no difficulty unsolved, secured him high honours and a Trinity Fellowship. Few men have attained that position by dint of studies which formed so mere an episode in their intellectual life. He quickly returned to music, and for years continued a struggle for executive skill which at last became obviously hopeless. Yet his devotion to music was not wasted; rather it bore fruit far more valuable to the world, though less satisfying to himself, than the manual dexterity which he had craved in vain. He wrote "The Power of Sound," a treatise which judges more competent than I, abroad and at home, have accepted as a work of serious—even of unique—value on the philosophy of music. And even the unmusical reader can discern in the book the combination of its author's characteristic qualities; —on the one hand the depth, the force, the refinement of emotion; on the other hand the trenchant

dialectic, the logic which pierces like a dividing sword through the tangle of sentimental fallacies with which all æsthetic criticism is still painfully encumbered.

When music failed him he had to consider his next step. And here it should be said that, although he possessed a competence, he was far from rich; nor, on the other hand, had he been brought up with the tastes and habits of a poor man. Again, in spite of the commanding stature and noble presence which gave the impression of so much force and fire,—in spite, too, of much actual muscular and athletic power,—he was not really robust; and, as is sometimes the case with very tall men, he suffered from a constitutional lassitude which often made all effort distasteful. It might have been expected, then, that either he would live a quiet dilettante life, or that if he worked hard it would be with the object of increasing his income. But, in fact, neither of these alternatives would have been tolerable to him. He could not bear to live without hard work; yet toil was so irksome that he could not willingly undertake it for a merely personal end. Since, then, artistic delight had failed him, he had to appeal to a still deeper, a still more potent stimulus. That stimulus he drew from his moral nature, on which I have not yet touched; — from the profound sympathy for human pain, the imaginative grasp of sorrows not his own, which made the very basis and groundwork of his spiritual being. As yet this power of sympathy had expended itself mainly in private friendships, and had given to his affections, to his consolations, a unique quality on which I cannot now dwell. And

it had also interwoven itself with his craving for the power of musical expression, in which his goal defined itself to him as the capacity so to render the best music as to make "the poorest dwellers in the dingiest cities" enter with him into "the rarer air of pure artistic exaltation," and thus to infuse "the isolation of inward experience" with "the living interest of human sympathy."[1]

And now, in the ruin of artistic hopes, this human sympathy, this deep desire to better the lot of suffering men, became and remained his dominant, almost his only motive. But the right mode of altruistic action was not easy to find. He felt himself too sceptical—perhaps also too fastidious—for many of the forms of practical philanthropy. He took no sanguine view of his power to influence mankind by any purely literary production. He felt that the field in which his mind could work most effectively was the field of exact logic, of cogent argument, in science or metaphysics. And he turned to medicine, not as a pursuit in which he would be likely to attain practical success, but as a branch of science which, if grasped aright, might open at least some indirect avenues to usefulness. In the preliminary studies for the medical degree—physics, physiology, chemistry—he showed unusual thoroughness, unusual penetration; and passing the second M.B. Cantab. examination (1880), he accomplished the scientific, as opposed to the clinical part, of a physician's training. But he soon found, as he had expected, that for clinical work

1 "The Power of Sound," p. 422.

he had no special aptitude; that he would do well to leave the bandaging of the actual physical wounds of poor humanity to men who perhaps sympathised with the sufferer less, but who fastened the bandages better. He had not, therefore, definitely adopted any profession, when in 1882 a possibility presented itself of serving both science and humanity in an unlooked-for and adventurous way.

In order to understand the manner in which this new appeal affected him, we must consider for a moment the nature of his deep realisation of the sorrows of mankind. This sympathetic pain, though it prompted him to share in various benevolent movements, was essentially not of a kind which any specific philanthropies, any social readjustment, could assuage or satisfy. Rather—like the melancholy of Marcus Aurelius, or of those fragments of early Greek philosophy which enter, as it were, at the first onset into the very core of human fates—Edmund Gurney's compassion for his neighbours' suffering was based, not so much on removable, as on irremovable things; on that endless disproportion between man's desire and his attainment which evolution can only intensify; on that sudden snapping of man's deepest affections which evolution can only teach him to feel as a still crueller wound; on that wail of anguish which, though it should arise but from one hopeless, helpless creature amid the whole planet's broad content, must still prevent us from regarding with enthusiasm, with worship, a universe in which a single sentient being is born to undeserved woe.

EDMUND GURNEY

In his essay on "The Human Ideal," [1] the most deeply-felt chapter, perhaps, in all that he wrote, he used his penetrative imagination, his unshrinking reason, to tear aside the fallacies of those who speak to us of earthly life without a future as of a satisfying and glorious thing; who would fain gild with enthusiasm that outlook before which the wisest men have been the most sternly silent, or the most courageously resigned.

"The Positivist religion," he says, "is 'to explain man to himself.' The Positivist, then, is able to imagine that the time will come when a man will never, in sudden flashes, see himself, and his brief hold on life, and his relations to existence outside him, as an inscrutable riddle; a time when 'the abysmal deeps of personality' will be wholly filled up; a time when men will be insensible to the irony of affections and devotions spreading and deepening up to the blighting and clipping point; of 'Humanity overflowing the individual as the ocean does a cup,' till the cup happens one day to turn upside down; of the voice of conscience speaking in tones whose depth and urgency seem often a mockery of their contents; of the Goddess in whose paths 'flowers laugh' and 'fragrance treads' crushing worshippers beneath her chariot wheels; of the sense of infinite import in life, to be found (we are told) by each in the mere multitude of lives stunted and limited like his own."

The practical lesson which he draws is virtually

[1] *Tertium Quid*, Vol. I.

identical with that taught by J. S. Mill in his celebrated posthumous essay, namely, that it is helpful, not injurious, to the moral welfare of mankind, that they should indulge in the hope—or speculate on the possibility—that our life may not be truly ended by the death we know.

"I simply state, as a psychological fact, that the sense of possibilities that can never be disproved is capable of exercising pervading effect on the human mind which is absolutely irrelevant to any numerical estimate of odds; and that human spirits, oppressed in the manner described in this paper, find the sense of these possibilities an ineradicable fact in their lives. On paper, in a scheme of philosophy, the 'grand Perhaps' may look as feeble as 'Humanity' looks imposing. But there is another arena. In the hearts of countless individuals the former expands into a pervading influence, where the latter shrinks into a mere noun of multitude. To tell them that 'nebular hypotheses' are 'the religion of scholars, and not of men and women with work to do,' has no force unless it can be proved that the work remains undone; that the hypotheses interfere with the human creed and the ideal of self-renouncing duty; that they have some anti-social tendency which contains the germs of their own decay. No such proof has been given. As the spread of science supplies no direct, so the spread of social morality supplies no indirect argument for the probable cessation of an attitude of mind which is equally compatible with both."

Whatever may be said of such utterances as these,

they will scarcely be held to indicate either conceited fanaticism or eager credulity. I have thought it important to quote them, because the *primâ facie* presumption in scientific minds against any research which bears even indirectly on the problem of man's immortality, assumes that such research is only undertaken either by men whose feeling for evidence on all subjects is weak, or by men whose personal craving for a future life is vivid enough to blind them to the slightness of the evidence for that special belief. Neither of these categories can be stretched to include Edmund Gurney. It has already been shown —and all his writings prove it—that the type of his intellect was not rhetorical, imaginative, mystical, but sceptical, analytical, and—to use again the old Platonic word which best describes him—*dialectical*. And as regards personal pre-occupation with a future life he was again far removed from the character which *à priori* critics might have assigned to him. For my part, indeed, I assuredly cannot admit that a pre-occupation with the unseen world, to whatever pitch it may be carried,—that a laying up of our treasure in things above, however ardently our eyes may turn to where that treasure lies, — need either diminish a man's terrene energy, or blunt his eagerness to know the very truth—the truth on which he has staked his all. I leave it to those who condemn such a temper of mind to consider how much of high religion, of high philosophy they must strike out, as noxious surplusage, from the upward strivings of mankind.

But I am not here imagining an ideal character, but describing a real one; and I merely state it as a

fact that Edmund Gurney had *not* a strong personal craving for a future life — had not even that kind of confidence in Providence, or in evolution, which leads most of us to take for granted that if that life exists, then for us and for the universe all must in the end be well.

When, therefore, he entered upon that class of inquiries behind which the great hope obscurely hangs, this was not with any personal flutter, with any stimulus from inward longings or inward terror. Reason had convinced him, not that if there were a future life the universe *must* be good, but that if there were a future life the universe *might* be good; and that without such a life the universe could *not* be good in any sense in which a man moved with the sorrows of humanity ought to be called upon to use that word. And thus his attitude in the inquiry reconciled, if I may so say, the lessons of two opposing aphorisms,—the saying of Spinoza, "*De nulla re minus liber homo quam de morte cogitat*," and that older saying, and weightier still: "*Vita philosophi commentatio mortis.*" For his meditation on death, and on what might follow death, was begotten, I say, neither by cravings nor by fears; it was the deliberate outcome of a penetrating survey of the possibilities of weal for men.

His practical concern with such matters was of gradual growth. It began with a form of research— if research it could be called—strangely at variance with his previous companionships or habits of thought. He attended (and here I must confess to some persuasion on my own part), he attended, during the

years 1874–78, a great number of Spiritualistic *séances*. He sat in the *cénacles* of those happy believers, an alien, formidable figure, courteous indeed to all, but uncomprehended and incomprehensible by any. What knowledge, what opinions he gained in this long ordeal he never made known to the world, nor shall I here attempt to say. But this much I may affirm, I think, for all of us who seriously pursued that quest, that in the first place—in spite of much of failure—we could never persuade ourselves that we had a right to abandon it; and that in the second place we perceived that the *séances* with paid mediums, which formed the ordinary method of Spiritualism, were ill-calculated to lead us to any solid results; nay, that, in beginning our inquiry with the so-called Spiritualistic phenomena at all, we were somehow beginning it at the wrong end. I will not here repeat the account given in the Introduction to "Phantasms of the Living" of the gropings and the *tâtonnements*, the disappointments and the successes, which ultimately taught us, in 1882, to discern a less hazardous line of approach to the cloud-capt citadel. The Society for Psychical Research was founded, with the establishment of thought-transference—already rising within measurable distance of proof—as its primary aim, with hypnotism as its second study, and with many another problem ranged along its dimmer horizon. Here, at length there was sea-way for a definite adventure; with wide possibilities, indeed, of failure —with the bones, so to say, of shipwrecked precursors bleaching along all the shore,—but yet

with chances also of an achievement which, though in our lifetime it might remain obscure and inchoate, should grow and broaden to unguessed issues in generations yet to be. But there was urgent need of some one to give the *coup de collier* to the new enterprise; — of an Honorary Secretary—as far removed as possible from fool or fanatic—who should devote his whole time and energy gratuitously to the task.

The previous pages will have enabled the reader to judge how far by gifts, by training, by various experience, by deep-seated thirst for knowledge, Edmund Gurney was fitted for such a post as this. He undertook it; and in all the work—whatever be its final appraisement—which our Society has thus far accomplished, his part is closely interwoven. That work has been in great measure conjoint and consultative; but his was ever a leading voice in the consultation. And there is much also which practically belongs to him alone. On two such points I may dwell; two points on which his services to human knowledge cannot, I think, be controverted even by those who take a wholly adverse view as to the value of those further inquiries which would fain launch the bark of science upon a strange, an unvoyaged sea.

The two points of which I speak are his work in psychological hypnotism, and his work on the theory of hallucinations.

I claim that he was the first Englishman who studied with any kind of adequate skill the psychological side of hypnotism, making therein experi-

ments,—cut short, of course, by his premature death, but already of the highest value;—experiments which, though sometimes concurrent with those of the French school, were yet independently executed; and which mark, as it seems to me, an epoch in the study of hypnotism in England.

Three names before Edmund Gurney's are associated with three successive stages of the history of mesmerism or hypnotism in the British Empire. The first is that of Elliotson,—a man who, partly through his own lack of tact and temper, but mainly through the sheer ignorance, the sheer bigotry of his medical contemporaries, has never yet received the honour which was justly his due. He practically introduced curative mesmerism into England; he made a vast number of experiments and threw out a vast number of ideas; and although many of his experiments were loose, and many of his conclusions hasty, yet if he could look down on the great centres of hypnotic activity to-day,—on the Salpêtrière and the Charité, on Nancy, on Bordeaux, on Toulon,—he might fairly claim that the great mass of the phenomena which he spent his later life in demonstrating,—to be met only with calumnies, sneers, or silence,—have now become the commonplaces of the lecture-room, and the routine of clinical practice.

The second name is Esdaile's. Esdaile had persistence like Elliotson's, with better tact, or better fortune; and the long series of carefully-noted, carefully-figured operations which he performed under mesmeric anæsthesia upon Hindoos in the Calcutta Hospital made it impossible for any candid inquirer

to doubt longer that the mesmeric trance was a real, a valuable discovery.

The third name, of course, is that of Braid, whose discovery that a similar condition of trance or "hypnotism" can be sometimes induced without gaze or "passes,"—without any intervention of a second person at all,—by mere fixation of the eyes on a bright object with an inward and upward squint, was a most important contribution to our knowledge of abnormal states. Braid's work became gradually known, and hypnotism met with readier acceptance than mesmerism had found. Yet Braid's work—such was the animus of the time—was welcomed much less for its own positive value than because it was supposed to supply a kind of refutation to the mesmerists who had preceded him. It is needless—or it should be needless—now to say that Braid's work was in reality a *development* of their previous work, superseding or modifying, indeed, certain premature or too exclusive theories, but unmistakably indicating that the whole problem of the induction of trance, or of somnambulic states, was an even wider one, and even more important to science, than a Puységur or a Petetin, an Elliotson or an Esdaile, had ever ventured to imagine. This narrow polemical spirit had its usual retribution in the retardation of further discovery. Braid's experiments — valued only as confounding Elliotson's — were not themselves repeated or pursued. Incredible as it may seem, in all the long interval from (say) 1855 till 1883—the date of publication of Edmund Gurney's first experiments — there was

scarcely an experiment performed in England which added anything further to our knowledge. About 1875 a great revival of hypnotism began in France—began with Charcot and Richet in Paris, and spread from another focus—the persistent labours of Dr. Liébeault—to the Professors at Nancy. Since that date a whole literature of hypnotism has grown up in France; experiment outstrips experiment, and memoir supersedes memoir with bewildering rapidity. But to all this movement there was in England for some years no response whatever. Nay, there was no apparent knowledge that such a movement was going on; and when some of us in 1883–84 began to report from personal observation what was being done in France, and to add some experiments and reflections of our own, our papers were received with astonishment bordering on incredulity. Even yet, the *savants* on this side of the Channel are strangely indifferent to what is being done in this subject by *savants* on the other; but nevertheless there has been progress enough in the past five years to convert a good many of our quondam paradoxes into truisms. To recount the experiments of others, however, is not a difficult task. Edmund Gurney did much more than this. He devised and carried through (1885–88) a complex series of experiments, surpassed by no other hypnotist in exactness, either of observation or of record, with a definite view to the investigation of two great problems which lie on the borderland between physiology and psychology, and which are apt to seem not less but more perplexing the wider our induction extends. The first question may be phrased as

follows: "Is the hypnotic state ever induced by some yet unrecognised agency—some specific influence of operator on subject?" To this question Edmund Gurney and I were, so far as I can discover, for some years the only writers who maintained the affirmative answer. But it is not, of course, to the mere maintenance of a view then altogether scouted, but now gradually gaining ground, that credit is due; but rather to the invention and execution of definite experiments testing the matter in a rigorous way. I must claim then—for in the vast preponderance of French work in hypnotism a piece of English work, unless clearly put forward, is likely to be overlooked—that Edmund Gurney's long series of experiments on the anæsthetisation of single fingers of a healthy waking subject, without his seeing the finger selected or receiving any suggestion as to which finger it was to be,—are not only the *best* experiments that have yet been made on this branch of the subject, but are about the *only* experiments where the conditions have for any long time been kept sufficiently rigorous to give the record of what occurred a permanent and objective value. The excellence, that is to say, of these experiments did not depend (as so often in hypnotism) merely on the susceptibility of the subjects employed (for the subjects, judged by a French standard, were not remarkable); but it depended on the inventiveness with which the experiments were planned, the caution with which they were executed, and the acumen with which the operator interpreted their results. Those results, though in some ways perplexing, are surely of very

high importance. For they prove—so far as any one operator's experience in this protean subject can be held to prove anything—they prove that there *is* sometimes in the induction of hypnotic phenomena some agency at work which is neither ordinary nervous stimulation (monotonous or sudden), nor suggestion conveyed by any ordinary channel to the subject's mind. I do not say that these experiments, or any one man's experiments with living organisms under such delicate conditions, can in themselves be called conclusive. If not repeated, they must fall to the ground. But, on the one hand, we still offer to repeat them, and to exhibit them, on the person of a perfectly healthy and normal man, to any medical or otherwise well-qualified observer. And, in the second place, the conclusion to which they point, so absolutely heterodox a few years ago, is now receiving adhesions from very different quarters. That conclusion is involved in the experiments in *sommeil à distance* of Gibert, Janet, Richet, Héricourt, &c. It is involved in the transferences of hysterical symptoms vouched for by Babinski. It is involved—in one of its forms—in the belief to which the veteran Liébeault, with characteristic openmindedness, has—after combating it for twenty years—avowed his conversion, as to the efficacy in the treatment of *sleeping infants* of certain hypnotic methods which he previously supposed to be operative by dint of *suggestion* alone. What the precise nature of this influence, or of these influences, may be is a further question. Edmund Gurney discussed that point in his last published paper on

"Hypnotism and Telepathy," in *Proceedings*, Vol. IV., but he did not suppose that the last word, or his own last word, had yet been said on the subject.

The second hypnotic problem at which he worked with marked success was the profoundly important one of hypnotic memory—"What is the relation of the memory in one hypnotic state to the memory in another hypnotic state, and of both to the normal or waking memory?" This is at the very root of the psychology of hypnotism; and yet, so far as I can discover, before Edmund Gurney's time there had in England been absolutely no experiments (unless some scattered observations of Elliotson's are to be so counted) which threw light on this fundamental question. It may be doubted whether even now there are many English readers who can comprehend the full value of the papers on "The Stages of Hypnotic Memory," "Stages of Hypnotism," &c., which practically opened up in England a whole department of experimental psychology. Still fewer, perhaps, are those who will be prepared for my next remark,—that, from the point of view of a technical estimate of Edmund Gurney's claims as a *savant*, the question is not as to the value of these papers, but as to their *priority*. The publication of his first paper of importance in this line was preceded by a few months by the publication of the first of the remarkable papers of a cognate kind by which Professor Pierre Janet has so rapidly made for himself so distinguished a place in contemporary psychology. But I know for a fact—nor will our

courteous friend at Havre be disposed to question it—that Edmund Gurney's experiments were thought out, and in great part performed, before he so much as heard (I was myself his informant) of the brilliant results attained by the French Professor. He of course instantly recognised the value of those results; but, as will be seen by comparing the two series of experiments, he continued to the end to work on his own original lines.

I do not wish to exaggerate my friend's performances, or to show any insular lack of appreciation of the achievements of foreign *savants*. But taking the history of hypnotism *in England*, the history, that is, of one of the main branches of experimental psychology in a country which has long boasted of her psychologists, it seems to me that beside the epoch-making names of Elliotson, Esdaile, and Braid, the critical historian must place the name of Edmund Gurney.

Leaving now the subject of hypnotism, the next important piece of work which I claim for my friend is the revision and large extension of our previous knowledge as to *hallucinations*. To this important, but little explored, topic he was led by a somewhat unexpected road.

I have spoken of the discovery (as I regard it) of thought-transference, or telepathy, as the determining incident which led Edmund Gurney to devote himself to what, for want of a more distinctive appellation, we have entitled Psychical Research. In the slow experimental establishment of this discovery he took a leading share. And at the same

time he saw that this principle, once admitted, must have a wider than its merely experimental scope,—must be invoked as the nearest approach to an explanation of certain spontaneous phenomena, in all times loosely alleged to occur, and now confirmed by first-hand testimony which flowed in upon us in an amount far exceeding any previous harvest of that kind. If there be (and we soon became convinced that there veritably *are*) cases, too numerous for chance to explain, where an apparition or other hallucination has been truth-telling, or *veridical*,—has corresponded, that is to say, with the moment of death or crisis of the person whose aspect or voice (at a distance transcending the ordinary operation of the senses), is phantasmally discerned, — then here surely — whatever else we have — we have at any rate a communication between mind and mind, effected through no ordinary, no recognised channel. It was plainly our business to deal with all obtainable narratives of this kind,—to show how far these phantasms could be called into court as witnesses on the side of telepathy.

But yet to attempt to introduce hallucinations of any kind whatever as sources of trustworthy knowledge—nay, as the very basis and starting-point of deductions of the highest moment—this was an adventurous, a difficult matter. Plainly there was an indispensable pre-requisite—that some one at least of those who undertook thus to treat hallucinations from so new an aspect should show that he had mastered all that could be known of

them from the old, the ordinary stand-point. This task Edmund Gurney undertook.

Of his treatise on hallucinations—for it is veritably a treatise, though compressed and packed almost beyond the limits of lucidity—of his treatise on hallucinations included in "Phantasms of the Living," it must be said, as of his essays on the psychological side of hypnotism, that it is not only the *best* discussion in our language, but actually the *only* one in our language; the only connected review of foreign work on the subject, the only serious attempt at scientific determination of the genesis of hallucinations, their concomitant phenomena, their relative frequency. Previous essays in English with a similar title had been little more than mere groups of anecdotes; they had still belonged to the pre-scientific era. Nay, there were not even any statistics available on the matter at all until Edmund Gurney took the trouble — the tedious trouble — to get census-papers filled up by over 5000 persons taken at random, and thus to gain, though not all the information desirable, at least so much more information than any one had possessed before him that his conclusions must serve as the point of departure for any further inquiry through this channel into the mechanism of the mind of man.

Thus far, then, I have claimed for Edmund Gurney certain psychological successes of an ordinary kind—pieces of work independent of that more advanced, more hazardous line of inquiry which leads without a serious break from telepathic ex-

periments to the appraisement of phantasms of the living and of the dead. For my own part, however (I need hardly say), I look upon his work in this direction as the main achievement of his brief career. But since that work was done under conditions somewhat unusual,—conditions in which he himself took deep delight—done in consultation by a small group united both in personal friendship and in intellectual interests,—it is impossible to state with accuracy the part taken by any member of that group, however active and indispensable. It will be more to the purpose to try to define the temper of mind which Edmund Gurney brought to this difficult task—a temper of which the three leading notes were disinterestedness, precision, sympathy.

By *disinterestedness* I mean more than that disregard for the chances of personal fame or fortune which was implied by his devoting himself unreservedly to this unpopular, this almost derided, quest. I mean an intellectual disengagement from prejudice on his own side—a readiness, in Plato's words, "to follow the argument whithersoever it leadeth"—a genuine, instinctive delight in the mere process of getting at truth, apart from any consideration of the way in which that truth might affect his own argument. In controversy he showed—if I may make a perhaps fanciful appeal to fashionable doctrines of heredity — a combination of the acumen belonging to a descendant of the late Baron Gurney's, with the chivalrous, fighting quality of the Greys, from whom on the mother's side he sprang. He delighted

in the fray—delighted in acknowledging a fair stroke or rebutting a foul one; delighted in replying with easy courtesy to attacks envenomed with that *odium plus quam theologicum* which the very allusion to a ghost or the human soul seems in some philosophers to inspire.

His precision of thought again, was of course essential in an enterprise the very object of which was to import, so far as possible, the scientific spirit into a region hitherto abandoned to loose reports and chimerical fancies. But to his mind precision, thoroughness, minute attention, were not duties so much as necessities. He had, indeed, too much of these qualities for complete effectiveness in common life. His fastidious exactness was incompatible with that "breadth of style" which creates a strong popular impression. He pointed out too many difficulties ever to give the air of having arrived at an incontrovertible solution. Yet for the particular work which he was called upon to do these qualities were above all things needful. But for them, that congeries of widely-gathered evidence which, under his shaping hand, assumed corporate being as "Phantasms of the Living," would assuredly have presented many more vulnerable points to the searching criticism to which it has very rightly been subjected.

The strict canons of written and oral investigation on which Edmund Gurney—taking the lion's share of the joint work—with ever-growing scrupulousness insisted, involved, of course, an arduous and a continually increasing labour. For some three

years (1883–85), his life was largely spent in letter-writing and in interviews, bearing on the cases to be cited in the book. Many of these letters were on topics requiring careful handling; most of them needed to be in autograph; although, as the work went on, Mr. G. A. Smith's competent help as secretary was of essential service. But he often wrote fifty autograph letters in a day, sometimes as many as sixty—involving some eight or nine hours of close application. These letters, again, needed to be supplemented by the still more important work of personal interviews. Almost every living witness of importance in "Phantasms of the Living" (and many persons whose names do not appear in that book) had before the book was published been personally visited by one of ourselves; and the chief, the most successful part of this delicate work was performed by Edmund Gurney. Here it was that his power of *sympathy* showed itself so rare, so indispensable. For the intimate narratives which form the bulk of "Phantasms of the Living" were not (as critics have sometimes assumed) pressed eagerly upon us by vain or imaginative informants. Rather they were for the most part won with difficulty from opposing reserve; they seldom depended upon one witness alone; and even when the principal witness understood the importance of the inquiry, and was willing to help us, there were generally subsidiary witnesses whose testimony was hard to come at. And there was perpetual need to steer between the conflicting prepossessions of two classes—the

mystics (or would-be mystics), and the *savants* (or would-be *savants*), who were ready on each hand to denounce the inquirer either as weakly credulous in accepting, or as coarsely sceptical in rejecting, accounts which no narrator till now had seriously endeavoured either to invalidate or to confirm. To these problems, half social, half scientific, Edmund Gurney brought more than the mere instinct of courtesy, more than the mere lawyer-like acumen. He brought a heart touched with the sense of human fates — an eye which grew steadier as it gazed on issues of deeper import; his presence held with a gentle sway; and I believe that after all his hundreds of interviews he never left a true mystic disgusted with his hardness, or a true *savant* with his credulity.

What this power of sympathy was to his intimate friends I must leave my readers to imagine. Yet no sketch of Edmund Gurney as colleague or associate could be complete without some mention of one faculty which, though it scarcely appears in his published works, was to his friends a constant, a characteristic charm. I mean his *humour*,—a spring fed from the deepest sense of life's incongruities—an arrowy satire winged with tenderness —a laughter nigh to tears. His complex nature, with all its conflicting gifts and impulses, bloomed at its freest in this intimate, this fugitive flower. All this has perished; no trace is left, save in the memories of those for whom life has lost its rarest savour.

We work on at a task grown harder, with heavy

hearts. Yet we have a fresh, a powerful motive to pursue it with what strength we may. Our friend's ultimate fame must follow the fortunes of a yet undecided adventure. It is only by pressing to ever larger issues that enterprise of which he was so bold a pioneer that we may win for him that honour which was not what he worked for, but which we none the less account his due.

And meantime there are one or two at least for whom, as no living man was dearer than Edmund Gurney, so also few men, dead or living, have done work more vital than he. Not by emotion, but by evidence, by facts and not by rhetoric,—himself not greatly hoping,—he has helped us towards the eternal hope. He is gone; but he has already done what he could to console us. Not all in vain did his heart grieve for human woe. He beat against the bars of our earthly prison-house, and he has forced a narrow opening through which we seem to breathe immortal air.

II

PROFESSOR ADAMS

1892

By the death of John Couch Adams, Lowndean Professor of Astronomy in the University of Cambridge, our Society has lost one of those rare men whose individual judgment, formed aloof from party and prepossession, can still carry, without published argument, a serious weight of its own. Cautious, modest, and retiring, even to a fault, Professor Adams was not lavish of words or declarations. His mind was a well of wisdom; but those who would have drawn thence for any slight or party purpose were apt to find that they had nothing to draw with, and that the well was deep. Yet on those rare occasions when he was strongly convinced that some controverted view was sound, some difficult course was right, his benignant, measured speech became the very weapon which a wise man addressing wise men would most desire to command. Few men of eminence intervened so seldom in any debate; no man, when he did intervene, left so little desire in prudent disputants to get up and answer him.

We could not have been surprised if a *savant* of

this temper had kept wholly aloof from a line of research such as ours;—concerned as it is with questions as to which Bacon said long ago that they "have not been more laboriously inquired than variously reported; so as the travail therein taken seems rather to have been in a maze than a way." The more encouraging was it to find that the man whose meditative outlook on planets, moon, meteor-streams, had veritably, and not once alone, transformed a maze into a way, was deeply assured that the same change might be wrought in our subject-matter also by the same process of steady labour, of dispassionate care. Throughout the past ten years of our work his sympathy never failed us;—a sympathy the more valuable inasmuch as he had, of course, no illusions as to the strength of our advancing column, or the nearness of our goal. But he was sure that what we were doing was right to do; he held unwaveringly that through these adits lay an unassailable, if a slow, advance into the knowledge of things unseen.

To a man whose fate has called him to move gropingly among conceptions which to him seem all-important, but which most men hardly care for sufficiently to investigate, or even to attack, an approval such as Professor Adams' comes with a force of reassurance which those who fight with great parties behind them can seldom either feel or need. How greatly did this one man's few grave words outweigh all hasty, momentary utterances hostile to the quest!—outweighed them as the flashing Leonids, whose sweep he tracked

through heaven, are outweighed by his own silent planet—a telescopic object, moving hidden in the deep of space, but laying from afar its unfaltering due control upon the secular aberrations of the wandering family of the Sun.

Εἷς ἐμοὶ μύριοι, said Heraclitus, ἐὰν ἄριστος ᾖ. One man is for me ten thousand, if that man be the best.

III

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1894

THE sudden death of Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, on December 3rd, at his Samoan home, has deprived the muster-roll of our society, as it has deprived the civilised world itself, of one of its most brilliant names. We cannot here survey the whole field of Mr. Stevenson's achievements. We must speak only of the actual link which interested him in our studies, and made his own literary history of such special value to the psychologist. He offered one of the most striking examples on record of the habitual uprush and incursion into ordinary consciousness of ideas or pictures conceived and matured in some subconscious region, without sense of effort or choice or will. His essay on "Dreams" (in the volume entitled "Across the Plains"), which recounts the assistance rendered to him by those subterranean workers whose story-telling inventiveness never failed him at need, is surely a psychological document worthy to set beside Coleridge's account of the dream-origin of "Kubla Khan." "Jekyll and Hyde" was itself a dream-inspiration; although here, as always, the

self above the threshold co-operated skilfully and conscientiously with the self below; and he had still proposed to himself, if leisure came, to remodel some points in that appalling romance into closer accordance with observed psychological fact.

To those who believe that the subliminal uprush is of the very essence of "genius," and that the further evolution of man must consist largely in his gaining a completer control over innate but latent faculty, the account of Mr. Stevenson's readily evocable and unfailingly helpful dreams comes at once as a scientific corroboration and as a stimulating hope. Here once more the spectrum of consciousness has been extended, the barrier between phases of personality overstept; and this new form of inspiration reveals the Subliminal Self as willing to help the greatest story-teller of our day, with the same obedience with which it has helped in other days the greatest of mathematicians, or of poets, or of saints.

Homo est; humani nihil alienum a se putat.

As it were from the stars beneath our feet and from the soul beyond our knowledge, the exiled, the unique voice came. It was well done of that simple people to clear a pathway through the untravelled forest, and bear his body upwards to where "lightnings are loosened" on Pala's crown. We may conceive him gazing thence as the Genius of the Southern Hemisphere; which over all the immensity of its isle-starred deep has never felt the moving presence of any spirit like his own.

IV

LORD LEIGHTON

1896

By the death of Lord Leighton,—better known as Sir Frederick Leighton,—the Society for Psychical Research has lost an Honorary Member of high distinction; whose cordial sympathy with our general aims and methods was founded upon a wide range and a fearless independence of thought. Not to men of science alone, but to all men truly representative of the things of the spirit, do we desire that our work should appeal; and when the late President of the Royal Academy allowed his name to be added to our list of Honorary Members,—a list which already included the name of Mr. Watts,—there was certainly no other artist whose adhesion could have been more welcome or more significant.

This is not the place either for criticism or for eulogy. But if indeed the Universe make for Beauty, therein must that clear spirit be at home; —the limner of many a fair and noble image;—

ἐξ αὐτοῦ παράγων ἀρχέτυπον κραδίης.

V

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

1898

MR. GLADSTONE'S relation to Psychical Research affords one more illustration of the width and force of his intellectual sympathies. Many men, even of high ability, if convinced as Mr. Gladstone was of the truth and sufficiency of the Christian revelation, permit themselves to ignore these experimental approaches to spiritual knowledge, as at best superfluous. They do not realise how profoundly the evidence, the knowledge, which we seek and which in some measure we *find*, must ultimately influence men's views as to both the credibility and the adequacy of all forms of faith. Mr. Gladstone's broad intellectual purview,—aided perhaps in this instance by something of the practical foresight of the statesman,—placed him in a quite different attitude towards our quest. "It is the most important work which is being done in the world," he said in a conversation in 1885. "By far the most important," he repeated, with a grave emphasis which suggested previous trains of thought, to which he did not care to give expression. He went on to apologise, in his courteous fashion, for his inability

to render active help; and ended by saying, "If you will accept sympathy without service, I shall be glad to join your ranks." He became an Honorary Member, and followed with attention,—I know not with how much of study,—the successive issues of our *Proceedings*. Towards the close of his life he desired that the *Proceedings* should be sent to St. Deiniol's Library, which he had founded at Hawarden;—thus giving final testimony to his sense of the salutary nature of our work. From a man so immersed in other thought and labour that work could assuredly claim no more; from men profoundly and primarily interested in the spiritual world it ought, I think, to claim no less.

VI

JOHN RUSKIN

1900

Ω οὗτος, οὗτος, Οἰδίπους, τί μέλλομεν
χωρεῖν; πάλαι δὴ τἀπὸ σοῦ βραδύνεται.

RUSKIN, then, has sunk to rest. The bracken and bilberries of the Lake-land which he loved so well have hidden the mortal shape of the greatest man of letters, the loftiest influence which earth still retained;—have enwrapped "the man dear to the Muses, and by the Nymphs not unbeloved"—

τὸν Μώσαις φίλον ἄνδρα, τὸν οὐ Νύμφαισιν ἀπεχθῆ.

We may rejoice that the long waiting is over; but memory all the more "goes slipping back to that delightful time" when he was with us in his force and fire; when it was still granted to hearken to his utterance; to feel the germ of virtue quickened by his benignant soul. For those who had the privilege of knowing Ruskin, the author came second to the man; and in this brief notice of his Honorary Membership of our Society I may perhaps be pardoned if I dwell in reminiscence, without attempting any formal review.

I met him first in my own earliest home,

beneath the spurs of Skiddaw,—its long slopes "bronzed with deepest radiance," as the boy Wordsworth had seen them long since in even such an evening's glow. Since early morning Ruskin had lain and wandered in the folds and hollows of the hill; and he came back grave as from a solemn service from day-long gazing on the heather and the blue. Later came many another scene;—pacings in the Old Court of Trinity with Edmund Gurney, who met those generous paradoxes with humorous play; graver hours at Oxford, in the sick room of the Duke of Albany, who, coming back to earth-life from perilous illness, found nowhere a guidance fitter than Ruskin's for eager and royal youth.

But chiefliest I think of him in that home of high thoughts where his interest in our inquiry first upgrew. For the introduction to the new hope came to him, as to Edmund Gurney and to myself, through a lady whom each of us held in equal honour; and it was on the stately lawns of Broadlands, and in that air as of Sabbatical repose, that Ruskin enjoyed his one brief season,—since the failure of his youthful Christian confidence,—of blissful trust in the Unseen. To one among that company a vision came,—as of a longed-for meeting of souls beloved in heaven,—a vision whose detail and symbolism carried conviction to Ruskin's heart. While that conviction abode with him he was happy as a child; but presently he suffered what all are like to suffer who do not keep their minds close pressed to actual evidence by continuous study.

That impress faded; and leaving the unseen world in its old sad uncertainty, he went back to the mission which was laid on him,—that mission of humanising this earth, and being humanised thereby, which our race must needs accomplish, whatever be the last doom of man.

> Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
> Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind;
> And even with something of a Mother's mind
> And no unworthy aim,
> The homely Nurse doth all she can
> To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
> Forget the glories he hath known,
> And that imperial palace whence he came.

But Ruskin's task,—however it might be pursued in forgetfulness of that unrememberable home,—was surely still the task (as Bacon called it) "to prepare and adorn the bride-chamber of the mind and the universe"; and that MELIOR NATURA which seemed to be Ruskin's, as it was Bacon's, divinity has never shone more radiantly upon the inward shrine of any lover of men. It was half in jest that I would complain to him that to Earth he gave up what was meant for Infinity and bent a cosmic passion upon this round wet pebble of rock and sea. "Ah, my friend!" he answered once when I spoke of life to come, "if you could only give me fifty years longer of this life on earth, I would ask for nothing more!" And half that season was granted to him, and all in vain;—for what Tithonus may tread for ever unweary the "gleaming halls of Morn"?

Then as that fervent life wore on, Ruskin turned more and more from the outward pageant to the human passion; from Alp and sunset to the sterner beauty of moral law. From the publication of "Unto this Last," one may trace that slowly-growing revolt against the Age which led him to preach in the end with such despairing emphasis the duty of protest, of renunciation, of sheer self-severance from most of the tendencies of modern life. The strength of this emotion in him was made, I remember, strangely plain on one occasion, when some of those who cared most for him had clubbed together, at Lord Mount-Temple's suggestion, to surprise him, on his recovery from a serious illness, with the present of a picture of Turner's, which he had once possessed and still dearly loved, but of which he had despoiled himself to meet some generous impulse. Never were givers more taken aback by the issue of their gift. For the sudden sight of the lovely landscape hung in his bedroom drew from him a letter of almost heart-broken pain,—at the thought that those whom he would so fain have helped,—who were thus willing to do this thing, or almost anything, to please him,—were yet not willing to do that other thing for their own souls' sake;—to come out from the iniquity,—to shake off the baseness of the age,—to bind themselves in the St. George's Guild with that small remnant who clung to things pure and true.

Indeed there was something naïve, something childlike, in his Brotherhoods, his Leagues, his solemn Covenants against the onflowing tide of

things;—but a stern reality beneath all this became strongly present to us then;—a deep compassion for the lonely heart, which so much needed love, yet could scarcely accept a fellowship in love which was not also a fellowship in all that he held for virtue.

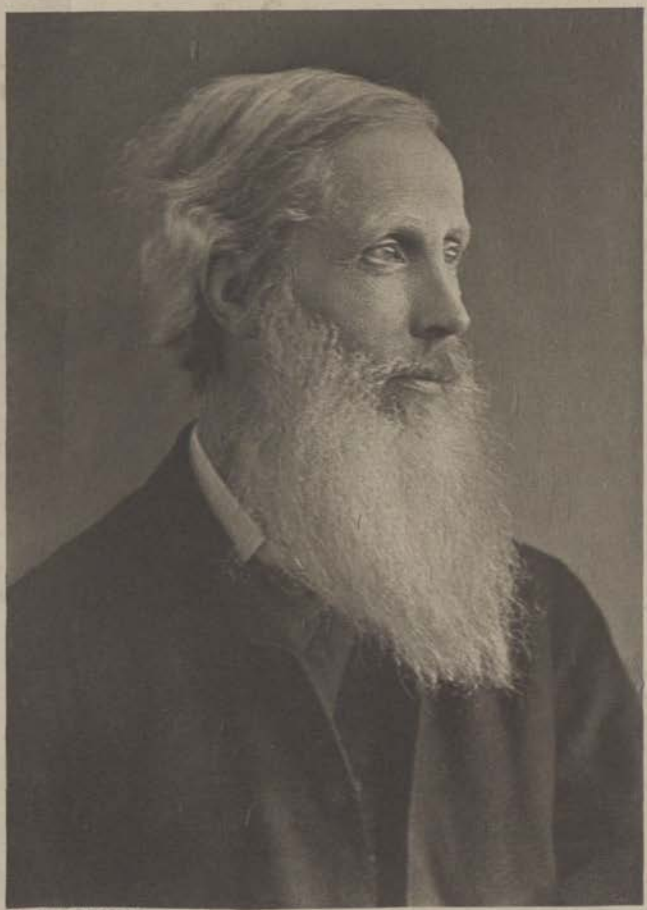
There are some who fear lest too pervading a belief in that other world may make men indifferent to the loveliness and irresponsive to the woes of *this*. Yet must that needs be so? or might we not treat even this world's problems with steadier heart, could we regain,—from some surer foothold in the Invisible,—that ancient serenity of the Saints? Watching that ardent soul, whose very raptures trembled on the brink of pain, I have thought that even from Ruskin's delight in Nature something of bitter yearning might have been soothed away, could he have seen in stream and moorland, nay even in

> great Skiddaw's self, who shrouds
> His double head among Atlantic clouds,
> And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly;—

could he have seen, I say, in these, as Plato saw in Castaly or in Hymettus, only the transitory adumbration and perishing symbol of somewhat more enduring and more fair. Nay, even from his compassion for stunted and erring souls might not the burning pain have gone, could he have seen those souls as Er the Paphlagonian saw them, marshalled in an everlasting order, of which but a moment's glimpse is shown;—till even "this

last" of men shall follow out, through all vicissitude, his endless and his mounting way?

And turning then, with heart full of such-like fancies, to that well-loved Leader's fate;—imagining his baffled isolation, and the disheartenment of solitary years;—I have pictured him waiting in the Coniston woodlands, as Œdipus in Colonus' grove,—waiting in mournful memory, in uncomplaining calm,—till he should hear at last the august summons,—nay, sounded it not like the loving banter?—of the unguessed accompanying God. "Come, Œdipus, why linger on our journey? Thou hast kept me waiting long."



By Mrs F. W. H. Myers

Henry Sidgwick

VII

HENRY SIDGWICK

1900

"From Maximus I learnt self-government, and not to be led aside by anything; and cheerfulness in all circumstances, as well as in illness; and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity, and to do what was set before me without complaining. I observed that everybody believed that he thought as he spoke, and that in all that he did he never had any bad intention; and he never showed amazement and surprise, nor did he ever laugh to disguise his vexation, nor, on the other hand, was he ever passionate or suspicious. He was accustomed to do acts of beneficence, and was ready to forgive, and was free from all falsehood; and he presented the appearance of a man who could not be diverted from right rather than of a man who had been improved. I observed, too, that no man could ever think that he was despised by Maximus, or ever venture to think himself a better man."

THESE simple sentences, in which the Stoic Emperor describes his honoured teacher, must recall to all of us, with striking appropriateness, the friend and leader whom we shall see on earth no more. There are others better qualified than I to retrace and estimate his manifold activities in the world of beneficent action and of lofty thought. I shall speak of him only in two capacities;—as the closest and most revered of friends, and as our captain in the great enterprise which it is the object of this Society to pursue.

Yet, as I speak, I shall feel the perpetual need of his sanction for what I say; and this utterance of

mine—the first which will have lacked his helpful criticism—must needs be of all utterances that which needs his help the most. No one but himself could truly depict the progress of that subtle and all-embracing intelligence, and my sketch will be but a blurred projection, where the master's thought is dimmed and deflected by passing through the disciple's mind.

It is just forty years since I went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, as a freshman of seventeen, and began to read with Henry Sidgwick as my private tutor in classics. But he soon ceased to take private pupils, and spread his own studies over a wider range. Even then he was, to use George Sand's phrase, *tourmenté des choses divines*, and he sought whether the study of Oriental languages, of ancient philosophies, of history, of science, would throw light upon that traditional Revelation which hung before him with so much of attractiveness in its promises, so much of uncertainty in its origin and its foundation. The theoretical result of these studies was not unusual; the practical outcome was academically almost unique. Theoretically he concluded that the Christian tradition—so long, at least, as it remains unsupported by cognate evidence—is not strong enough to upbear the orthodox creed as to the existence and the relation to mankind of a spiritual world. Practically he determined that, as he was no longer "a *bonâ-fide* member of the Church of England," he would resign his Trinity Fellowship, which was held upon that condition.

It may illustrate the bluntness of moral perception

which such tests engender, if I add that—even while myself aggressively orthodox—I nevertheless considered that the vague phrase of the Declaration, which had been substituted for a definite subscription to the Articles, permitted the retention of a Fellowship by any man who had been born into the Church of England, and had not taken any overt step to renounce his allegiance. Sidgwick's action, however, caused no surprise; he was already a man (as George Eliot later said of him), whose friends tacitly expected him to conform to moral standards higher than they themselves cared to maintain. His resignation, as is well known, brought others with it; it attracted the attention of Parliament, and exercised some real influence in procuring the abolition of University Tests.

In single-hearted devotion to the Right and Reasonable there was no period of life in which Henry Sidgwick had much to learn. But I shall not conceal,—what is indeed to his credit,—that in some other directions his ultimate character was largely of his own making. I cannot claim for him that he was by nature one of those men ὅσοις διδακτὸν μηδέν,—who, like his friend Charles Bowen, seem born to attract every love and to win every victory. Those who knew Sidgwick only in later life, when sympathy, benignity, the very ripeness and mellowness of wisdom, seemed his predominant traits, would be surprised to know of the coldness with which he was regarded by many contemporaries and juniors in his early student days. "High, self-contain'd, and passionless," like the mystic Arthur, — he almost

seemed, as he himself wrote to me later, to be "cased in a bark of selfish habit," and to fulfil all righteousness with a jejune precision,—almost as anxious not to accord too much to his neighbours as not to accord too little. There was a reserve, a preoccupation, perhaps also a proud sensitiveness, which chilled and checked in him the natural lavishness and *abandon* of youth. But he became, as I have said, the *faber indolis suæ*;—by sheer meditation, by high resolve, he made himself such as we all know him;—so that "no man could ever imagine either that he was despised by Maximus, or that he was himself a better man."

Yet partly also I ought to say of that earlier stage of his character that it was *I* who "half despis'd the height, To which I would not or I could not climb," and that on his part the treasure was not proffered till it was needed;—that his lesson of wise suspense and high resolve was taught to those only who had found the world's facile pleasures empty, and its confident solutions vain.

My own entry into his intimacy, at any rate, was in an hour of deep inward need.

> "Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of doubts that darken the schools":—

I had passed through all these stages, and visiting Cambridge again in 1869 to examine for the Moral Sciences Tripos, I felt drawn in my perplexities to Henry Sidgwick as somehow my only hope. In a star-light walk which I shall not forget (December 3rd, 1869), I asked him, almost with trembling,

whether he thought that when Tradition, Intuition, Metaphysic, had failed to solve the riddle of the Universe, there was still a chance that from any actual observable phenomena,—ghosts, spirits, whatsoever there might be,—some valid knowledge might be drawn as to a World Unseen. Already, it seemed, he had thought that this was possible; steadily, though in no sanguine fashion, he indicated some last grounds of hope; and from that night onwards I resolved to pursue this quest, if it might be, at his side. Even thus a wanderer in the desert, abandoning in despair the fair mirages which he has followed far in vain, might turn and help an older explorer in the poor search for scanty roots and muddy water-holes.

This was, I fear, but a slow and late conversion to the sense, which so many men had already reached, of Sidgwick's penetrating wisdom. When I think of other Trinity men whom I have found worthy of respect, from rather before my own date to rather after it,—of Montagu Butler, R. C. Jebb, G. O. Trevelyan, Henry Jackson,—of Balfours, Lytteltons, Darwins,—of W. K. Clifford, Lord Rayleigh, F. W. Maitland, Walter Leaf, Henry Butcher, Edmund Gurney, and the rest;—it seems to me as though all these had been prompter than I to appreciate that which in the end I knew so well. Nay, but in the end, perhaps, of all these, only Arthur Balfour and Edmund Gurney fell into quite the same attitude towards Sidgwick as myself:—the attitude as of "companions of Socrates":—as it were, say, a Kritias of happier omen, a Theages, a Simmias,—feeling an essential stimulus to self-development in his intel-

lectual search, his analysing *elenchus*;—and feeling also in the steadfastness of his inward aspiration a prophylactic, as each man might need it, against dilettantism, or self-indulgence, or despair.

How strong may be that craving for Wisdom, when once Wisdom has seemed to speak with us in the voice of a man! "Beauty," says Plato, "we love best, because we see her clearest; Wisdom with bodily eyes we cannot see, or terrible had been the loves she had inspired."

In that colloquy of which I have spoken above, Sidgwick and I had caught together the distant hope that Science might in our age make sufficient progress to open the spiritual gateway which she had been thought to close;—to penetrate by her own slow patience into the vestibule of an Unseen World.

"I sometimes feel," he wrote to me in 1872, "with somewhat of a profound hope and enthusiasm, that the function of the English mind, with its uncompromising matter-of-factness, will be to put the final question to the Universe with a solid passionate determination to be answered, which *must* come to something."

Yet the mode of putting this idea into practice was hard to find. We were forced in the beginning to follow pathways trampled for the most part by quite other than scientific feet. Our efforts of the first few years (1872–76) were tiresome and distasteful enough;—yet what were they in comparison to the hardship which a naturalist will undergo to trace (say) the breeding-ground of a song-bird, or to

establish the relationships of a worm of the sea? The efforts would have been as nothing had the results been clear. But the results of those years were on either side unsatisfactory;—so contradictory, so perplexing, that we could neither feel sure that there was nothing discoverable, nor yet that any valid discovery had in fact been made. For some years, indeed (1876–1881), we worked but fitfully,—half-sickened at "Craft, with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, follow'd up by her vassal legion of fools." Yet even those years were not lost. Driven perforce to question ourselves closely as to the validity of the principles from which we had started, we found no reason to desert them. Assuredly, if a spiritual world has ever been manifested to man,—has ever been intermingled with this material scheme of things,—it must be manifest, must be intermingled now. The failure of such an inquiry as ours;—I mean the ultimate relinquishment of every effort in this one direction of real possibility of advance;—must needs prove, if not a death-blow, yet a dire discouragement to every sacred memory, to all spiritual hope. It would be hard for future men to persuade themselves that what in ages of knowledge and clarity was seen to be fraud and illusion had yet been verity and revelation in the confused obscurity of the Past.

And thus it was to men wearied but not broken, discouraged but not despairing, that at the end of 1881 a fresh call to exertion came. An attempt was to be made, under somewhat better auspices than other such attempts which had failed before,

to confront spiritualistic and similar beliefs with scientific inquiry. Professor Barrett represented the scientific, Stainton Moses the spiritualistic camp. One of the first questions, of course, was whether Sidgwick would join in the proposed Society. Edmund Gurney and I made our adhesion contingent on his acceptance of the Presidency;—but reported to him that there seemed indeed to be a chance here of uniting new inquirers, and of pushing promising experiments.

He took time to consider his reply;—a reply on which the employment of much of the energy of his remaining eighteen years of life in fact depended. It would have been impossible to press him to consent. Admit that we had been right in making our laborious attempt;—nay, that it was still right to keep a watchful eye on any possible opening for inquiry. Yet he had done all that utmost fairness could require. *Ought* a man who in so many other ways could definitely advance human knowledge and human happiness to turn aside and commit himself anew—and more deeply than ever—to the gratuitous quixotism of endeavouring to benefit the race in this difficult and uncalled-for way?—to get the moon for a child who had not even cried for it?

"To the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." Who really *wanted* the new knowledge, even if we could manage to give it them? Men satisfied with an existing revelation did not desire to have that revelation extended. They no more wished to have their unique tradition enrolled and justified in a cosmic order than those

old warriors wished to have the eclipse which routed their foemen reduced under astronomical law. And as for the "Greeks,"—the men of science to whom we desired to link ourselves,—from them there was little sign as yet of anything but compassion or scorn.

On the other side was the fact that, however unsatisfactory our quest might have thus far proved, there yet had never been (as Sidgwick himself had said) "any given moment at which we felt that we had a right to abandon it." Its problems were still absolutely unsettled; and it was still possible that at any moment light might come. And the original thesis still stood firm—namely, that whether or no it be possible by observation and experiment, — along the paths of science patiently pursued,—to raise the human race into ethical stability, — the Cosmos into intelligible coherence; — at any rate these results are certainly not attainable in any other way. Without fresh facts none of us can get any further. There are simply not enough known determinants for any valid solution. What use in fondling hallowed traditions, or in juggling with metaphysical terminology? Unless the human race can find more facts, it may give up the problem of the Moral Universe altogether.

Sidgwick consented to become the first President of the Society for Psychical Research; and on July 17th, 1882, delivered an Inaugural Address (*Proceedings* S.P.R., Vol. I., page 78) which in its freedom alike from pretentiousness and from contentiousness set a precedent from which he never departed.

Of what essential value his services were to the new body has been well shown in a letter recently sent by Mr. Podmore to the *Daily Chronicle*:—

"For the first few years of its existence (except for an interval, during which he stepped aside in favour of the late Professor Balfour Stewart) Mr. Sidgwick acted as president of the Society. But the bare statement of that fact conveys a very inadequate idea of the real nature of the services rendered by him. That he gave largely — very largely—of his personal means to help the work of investigation in those earlier years is the least of his benefits. He presided throughout at our councils; he took an active share in the tedious work of experiment, of examining witnesses, of collecting and appraising evidence; the lines on which our work could best be done were laid down by his advice and pursued under his personal direction; all the publications of the Society were issued under his immediate supervision. That of late years he has delegated to others many of these functions was due less to any decay of his personal interest in the work of investigation than to the feeling that his immediate supervision of all details was no longer necessary. But he has throughout these eighteen years been a regular attendant at our meetings, and has taken a constant and predominant part in all our deliberations. Whatever position the S.P.R. may hold to-day, whatever good work it may have done in exposing error or in directing attention to neglected facts in human psychology, its success is due, in the largest measure, to the wisdom, the clear insight, the "particularly sane intellect" (to quote the

words of your memoir), and, above all, to the pre-eminent justice and veracity of our first president."

No other man, I think, could have filled that post so well as he. We had before us no straightforward scientific task, such as could be planned once for all, and then parcelled out to committees for execution. What was needed was a wide and scattered inquisition into human faculty and human experience; an inquisition which could not rely only on familiar canons of evidence, but needed the establishment of many new criteria, consistent with each other and with the old. There was work for many specialists, but at the head of all there was manifest need of a *philosopher* in the widest sense;—of a man accustomed, like the author of the "Methods of Ethics" and the "Principles of Political Economy," to weigh conflicting opinions, to comprehend and meet the perplexities of varying minds.

Moral qualities were needed, too;—patience, and caution, and urbanity;—and above all a certain doggedness and fixity of resolve, which should pursue its course unbaffled by long delays, by mortifying defeat. And Sidgwick possessed, in an almost unique degree, that motive for dogged persistence which lay in a deep sense of the incurable incoherence of the intelligible world, as thus far grasped by men. More thoroughly than any other man known to me he had exhausted one after another the traditional creeds, the accredited speculations;—had followed out even to their effacement in the jungle the advertised pathways to truth. Long years of pondering had begotten

in him a mood of mind alike rare and precious;—a scepticism profound and far-reaching, which yet had never curdled into indifference nor frozen into despair.

His controversial urbanity, indeed, never quite concealed the clearness and even the sternness of his perception of the fallacies which both Christian apologetics and *à priori* metaphysics too often hide at their heart.[1] And thus, while renewing this toilsome quest in no sanguine spirit, he renewed it at least with the conviction that there was nothing else of equal moment to be done; that if, where religion and philosophy had failed in establishing certainty, Science were to fail also, "the human race," as he once said to me, "had better henceforth think about these matters" (the basis of morals, the government of the universe) "as little as they possibly can."

I shall not here attempt to define the various conclusions—or *non*-conclusions—at which this cautious thinker arrived in the course of his long research. I will quote only a few sentences,—for him of unusual definiteness,—to which he signed his name, at the close of that laborious statistical inquiry into hallucinations over which he presided, and which fills the tenth volume of our *Proceedings* (Vol. X., p. 394).

"*Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone.* This we hold as a proved fact. The discussion of its full implications cannot be attempted in this paper;—nor, perhaps, exhausted in this age."

[1] Thoroughly Socratic was his appeal for instruction to a fellow-examiner, when revising the papers of some ultra-Hegelian young man: "I can see that this is nonsense; but is it the *right sort* of nonsense?"

Now, it is true indeed, as those last words hint, that the scientific mind of the actual generation is scarcely prepared to use in any fruitful manner—or even to realise with full clearness—a discovery so far remote from that synthesis of knowledge on which human thought is at present mainly engaged. The fact alleged has few existing connections; it remains, so to say, on the mere surface of the hearer's mind. Yet of course no *savant*, no philosopher, can deny that that one fact, if true, constitutes an inlet into cosmic laws of an absolutely new kind;—suggests operations and an environment of which we have hitherto possessed no positive knowledge whatever. It forms a first step towards exactly what we are aiming at,—namely, the discovery by scientific methods of a spiritual world. It is a fact whose bare existence must negative much previous theorising and suspend much more;—must negative that mechanical materialism which asserts that "the world is made of ether and atoms, and there is no room for ghosts;"—must suspend that obscurantist timidity which assumes that we already know as much as we ever shall know, or ever ought to know, as to the soul or the destiny of man. The attraction of straws to amber was in like manner for many years a phenomenon too remote from existing knowledge to sink deep even into the most eager minds: yet that unexplained physical attraction *then*, like this unexplained spiritual attraction *now*, was probably the phenomenon of greatest pregnancy offered to the observation of men.

Thus far, perhaps, but hardly farther, may one

here insist on the importance of the psychical work accomplished by one who always insisted that such accomplishment was scarcely to be looked for yet; that we pioneers ought to be well content if we could prepare the scientific mind of the opening century for a forward step such as has never been dreamt of till now;—prepare the unborn workers, in every realm of philosophy and religion,

> To cast the kingdoms old
> Into another mould.

It has been said of Sidgwick that "although he was the most influential man in Cambridge, he founded no school." Not at Cambridge only, but over all the civilised world, I think that there are many of us who will say that he did found a school, and that we are his scholars. He did not indeed bequeath to us his wisdom in the shape of crisp metaphysical bank-notes, which the Universe would ultimately decline to cash. Nor did he, like the old man in the fable, tell us to dig everywhere for a treasure which in reality was only to consist in the strengthening of our own minds. Nay, he pointed to a definite spot; he vigorously drove in the spade; he upturned a shining handful, and he left us as his testament, *Dig here.*

We can claim no monopoly in his spiritual benefactions;—but so far as in us lies we can resolve to carry on our work in his spirit. To do this, we must remember that our very *raison d'être* is the extension of scientific method, of intellectual virtues, —of curiosity, candour, care,—into regions where

many a current of old tradition, of heated emotion, even of pseudo-scientific prejudice, deflects the bark which should steer only towards the cold, unreachable pole of absolute truth. We must recognise that we have more in common with those who may criticise or attack our work with competent diligence than with those who may acclaim and exaggerate it without adding thereto any careful work of their own. We must experiment unweariedly; we must continue to demolish fiction as well as to accumulate truth; we must make no terms with any hollow mysticism, any half-conscious deceit. If we act thus, we need fear nothing for our adventure. The humblest scouts who strive loyally to push forward the frontier of Science, even though Science at first disown them, are sure in time to hear her marching legions possess the unfrequented way.

Yet one thing more. To conform to scientific rule and procedure is a task within the power of diligent men. We must not leave that undone;—but if we would follow in our first President's steps, there is something harder than that which we must do. Sidgwick was not only cautious, systematic, self-controlled, he was also unresting, undeviating, inwardly ardent to the end;—possessed, as Plato has it, with that "iron sense of truth and right" which makes the least indication of intellectual as well as of moral duty fall on the heart as an intimate and urgent command:—nay, which bids a man place hope and joy in those things only, "by dwelling on which it is"—as Plato again tells us —"that even God is divine."

In ardour, I say, rather than in circumspection, in force of will rather than in pondering hesitancy, lay the true core of Sidgwick's life. Even his affections—at first somewhat narrowly bestowed, somewhat sternly ordered—widened and deepened, until the emotional nature became as rich and strong as the intellectual. Many there are who know that they gave him of their best, and that he gave of his best to them;—not a few, for whom the Cambridge gardens and avenues will seem still charged with a sacred intimacy, and haunted by a quiet voice, and fragrant with memories of some help or guidance of long ago;—the reason's slowly-broadening outlook, the heart's slow-stablished calm.

"From kindly act to kindly act," he passed, like Marcus Aurelius, "with memory of God." Yet even the calmest existence, if sympathies be strong, must come at times within the wind of some tempest which has swept over other lives. I have watched him play his part in a great tragedy; I have seen with what delicate comprehension, with what inexhaustible tenderness, he could come to the succour of some innocent, long-suffering soul. I have seen him also in the joy of his own complete and fitting guerdon; a bliss which came to him through the affections, and was founded upon the deep community of upward-striving souls. We who most revered Henry Sidgwick desired for him no earthly honours. Those are but trivial ornaments for the life of such a man. We knew that the Primal Life has so woven our lesser lives into one shining fabric,—has interlinked our human

hearts in the unity of so strange a joy, — that, when once through some predestined encounter the spirit's kinships have been stablished for ever, there is no need for further questioning as to the recognition or recompense of even the best and wisest soul. Already in this life of earth heaven's prizes are bestowed with lavish hand; there is no man's achievement of wisdom or virtue which one woman's reverence cannot amply recognise, one love extravagantly repay.

And still through all personal joy or sorrow, loneliness or companionship, there lived on in this man's heart that impersonal ardour, that cosmic passion, which from suppression takes a whiter glow, and burns in the penetralia of the spirit, a silent inextinguishable flame. I have said above that our life's bark should be steered ever towards the icy pole of absolute truth. But there is a more living, a truer metaphor. My most vivid memory of my friend is as he would recite to me—and I have never known man or woman who could recite poetry like him—that noble apologue of Seekers which was the central expression of his inward life. I speak of Tennyson's poem of "The Voyage," that allegory of the lifelong quest of an Ideal,— through all its semblances the same unknown Reality, — whose pursuit is more entrancing and more imperious than any earthly joy.

> For one fair Vision ever fled
> Down the waste waters day and night,
> And still we follow'd where she led,
> In hope to gain upon her flight.

Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd, "O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst,
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

Nay, and the last stanza also spoke his indomitable resolve;—and not the less characteristically for the touch of self-mockery with which the poet ends the song:—

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led:
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,
But blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before:
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

To these hidden fervours Fate vouchsafed few occasions of outward enterprise, of manifest heroism. She left him content with the inward uplifting, and the unnoted sacrifice, and the secret habit of honour. Yet at last, with strangely solemn prevision, came to him that last opportunity which no Fate can begrudge to us,—the call of slow creeping Death.

I learnt his sentence from his own lips just before he presided at a meeting of the Synthetic Society, at which Mr. Arthur Balfour read a paper upon

Prayer. And thus it came about that my friend's last utterance,—not public, indeed, but spoken intimately to a small company of like-minded men,—was an appeal for pure spirituality in all human supplication; a gentle summons to desire only such things as cannot pass away. I will not say how his countenance showed then to my eyes;—eyes dimmed, perhaps, with secret knowledge of what so soon must be.

It was nearly three months later that at Terling Place I bade him—I will not say a last—farewell. Peace was there, without and within. Before the open window lay such a scene as Matthew Arnold had desired for his own departing:—

> Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
> The wide aerial landscape spread;—
> The world that was ere I was born,
> The world that lasts when I am dead.

Within was the nobly humble spirit, awaiting the great advancement, before that summer prospect of august serenity, amid that group of steadfast loves. "As I look back on my life,"—almost his last words to me were these,—"I seem to see little but wasted hours. Yet I cannot be sorry that you should idealise me, if that shows that I have made my ideals in some degree felt. We must idealise, or we should cease to struggle."

Idealisation is not always illusion. *That* was not illusion, when often with look or word that pointed onward and upward he made me feel, like Plotinus gazing on Justice and Virtue, οὔτε ἕσπερος οὔτε ἑῷος

οὔτω καλά—"neither evening star nor morning is so fair." *That* was not illusion, if sometimes the veil was lifted and the reality was clear; and, like Odysseus when at the end of all his wanderings that Figure stood by him in the way, I felt that through those eyes shone something that was not of earth, and Heavenly Wisdom walked beside me with the voice and semblance of my friend.

Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη, κούρη Διὸς ἀιγιόχοιο,
Μέντορι εἰδομένη ἠμὲν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ αὐδήν.

F. W. H. MYERS.

It may not be out of place at the close of this article to quote a brief extract from a letter of Henry Sidgwick's, which reveals the depth of affection existing between those two friends and fellow-workers:—

. . . For many years Frederic Myers has been as dear to me as the dearest of brothers—there is no one so qualified to enrich and make brighter and nobler the lives of those he loves.

Even before we were close friends I had the keenest admiration for his poetic genius; but he is better than his genius—or rather it manifests only one part of what makes him lovable. One might guess from his poetry the ardour and depth and fullness of his feeling, and his sensitiveness to all things fair and great and high; but the unwavering loyalty and tender observant sympathy that I have had from him in a friendship that has been without the smallest cloud from the first beginning—that can only be shown in life and not in verse.—Always your sincere friend,

HENRY SIDGWICK.

CAMBRIDGE.

VIII

G. F. WATTS, R.A.

1904

THE following lines were written shortly after visiting Mr. Watts some years ago:—

If it be true that there is a spiritual world, wherein, even while still on earth, we veritably are living; if it be true that with man's growing knowledge his conviction of that unseen environment must for ever deepen;—then types of character must needs arise responsive to that great revelation; there must be saints of a universal religion, who without thought of sect or dogma shall answer to the welcoming Infinite with simplicity and calm. No man, perhaps, has fulfilled this type more perfectly than the great painter who must soon, from a life's work on earth which none of his generation has equalled, pass to continue with all readiness his task elsewhere.

When last I saw Mr. Watts, in great old age, among the symbolic pictures of his later years, he seemed to me to have become himself a sacred symbol; and I should scarcely have wondered, as I gazed on him, if he had vanished into air. His look, his words were simple; he stood as it were

unconcernedly in both worlds, the one as present to him as the other. "Naturally I have cared to work at these ideas; I have never cared very much for anything else. . . . I felt that this was so; and I have all my life tried to express it."

It has fallen to me to speak with one other man only who seemed to me as close to things divine. The mighty mind of Tennyson "heaved with the heaving deep"; to the childlike intuition of Watts the great secret was, as the French phrase goes, *simple comme bonjour*. For such a man what we call death is reduced to a mere formality; and by an opening of inner vision the immanent becomes the manifest heaven.

By Mrs F. W. H. Myers

F. W. Myers

POEMS

TO TENNYSON

καὶ αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων.—PLOTINUS

I

WHEN from that world ere death and birth
  He sought the stern descending way,
Perfecting on our darkened earth
  His spirit, citizen of day;—
Guessed he the pain, the lonely years,—
  The thought made true, the will made strong?
Divined he from the singing spheres
  Eternal fragments of his song?

II

Hoped he from dimness to discern
  The Source, the Goal, that glances through?—
That one should know, and many turn—
  Turn heavenward, knowing that he knew?—
Once more he rises; lulled and still,
  Hushed to his tune the tideways roll;
These waveless heights of evening thrill
  With voyage of the summoned Soul.

III

O closing shades that veil and drown
The clear-obscure of shore and tree!
O star and planet, shimmering down
Your sombre glory on the sea!
O Soul that yearned to soar and sing,
Enamoured of immortal air!
Heart that thro' sundering change must cling
To dream and memory, sad and fair!

IV

Sun, star, and space and dark and day
Shall vanish in a vaster glow;
Souls shall climb fast their age-long way,
With all to conquer, all to know:
But thou, true Heart! for aye shalt keep
Thy loyal faith, thine ancient flame;—
Be stilled an hour, and stir from sleep
Reborn, rerisen, and yet the same.

POEMS

RETROSPECT

I

Alas, the darkened vault of day!
  The fading stars that shine no more!—
Alas, mine eyes that cloud with grey
  That beauty lucid as before!
Alone on some deserted shore,
  Forgetting happy hope, I stand,
And to my own sad self deplore
  The stillness of the empty land.

II

And I am he who long ago,—
  (How well my heart recalls it yet!)—
Beheld an early sun and low
  In fields I never shall forget;
The roses round were bright and wet
  And all the garden clear with dew,
In pleasant paths my steps were set
  And life was young and love was new.

III

How changed is this from that estate!
  How vexed with unfamiliar fears!
And from that child more separate
  Than friend from friend of other years,
Who strains quick sight and eager ears
  Forgiveness from the dead to win,
But only sees the dark, and hears
  A soundless echo of his sin.

VENICE

NEC ME MEA CURA FEFELLIT

Not vainly that Venetian Master set
'Twixt Doge and Doge the guardian Margaret
While from a soft and whirling glory smiled,
For Venice' sake, the Maiden with her Child,
And one great word the lords of Venice wist: —
"My peace be with Thee, Mark Evangelist!"—
Till for the grave enraptured kneeling man,
Grimani, or Priuli, or Loredan,
Thro' that clear vision fades, remotely fair,
The imperial City of all his earthly care,
Whose few last arches glimmer,—and all the rest
Whelmed in that thronging welcome of the Blest.

Ay, faithful heart! Thy saints were with thee then;
The race of angels is the race of men;
Their vanished light is on our vision shed,
Nor even their joy without us perfected;
Hold thou to these; on thee their grace shall flow;
They count thy coming and thy fates foreknow,—
Yea, as of old the deathless yearning share,
Love as of old, and as of old are fair.

How sleeps that City now! and far is fled
Her tale of fights outfought and Doges dead.
The flying Fames ring round her still; but she
Dreams in her melted Pearl of sky and sea.
For me too dreaming let the sunset fire
Shade the dark dome and pierce the pillared spire!
Let night and peace the cosmic promise pay,
And even the Soul's self dream into the day!

In dreams the heart is waking,
With dreams a dream she came,
The scattered dewdrops shaking
From hair that waved like flame.
O sweet! O woman-hearted!
O name I dare not say!
O face desired, departed,
And dreams that mock the day!

How many another maiden
I fain had loved again!
How sighed the heart o'er-laden
For rest and pause of pain!
O loves my Love forsaking,
Could these be tried or true?
I knew not always waking,
But when I dreamt I knew.

For still, 'mid fleeting fancies,
Herself, a vision, came;
The same aerial glances,
The woman-ways the same.
Alas, the waking lonely!
The hours that slowly roll!
That flying form was only
The shadow of her soul.

Ah, how could dreams discover
How dear a thing was this,—
No name of love or lover,
No thought of clasp or kiss:
But heart on heart was closing
As folded flowrets close,
And eyes on eyes reposing
Were dumb as rose with rose.

O Night! but send another
Of dreams that then I knew!
O sleep! thy true twin-brother
Must make the vision true!
Alas to find and choose her,—
To meet and miss her so!
Awake, awake to lose her,—
In dreams, in dreams to know!

O God, no proper place I see,
No work that I can do,
Myself I offer unto thee,
A sacrifice anew.

If Thou with clear sign from on high
Wilt mark me as Thine own,
How soon, how gladly would I die,
Unhonoured and unknown.

THRO' what new world, this happy hour,
What wild romance, what faery bower,
Are Nelly's fancies flown?
The dreamy eyes, the eager mind,
Of all imagined homes shall find
None sweeter than her own.

The best is truest; that was best
When Nelly, heart and soul at rest,
Knelt at the vesper-prayer;
No poet's dream, methought, could shed
O'er that unconscious childly head
So high a light and fair.

For innocence is Eden still;
Round the pure heart, the loving will,
Heaven's hosts encamped abide;
A Presence that I may not name
Thro' souls unknowing guilt or shame
Walks in the eventide.

DVM MEMOR IPSE MEI

" How clean forgotten, how remote and dead,
Those days and dreams that were of old so dear!
How lost and nought and wholly vanished
The prayers and joys, the passion and the fear!
O soul at gaze! as with sun-litten head
The emergent diver scans the darkling mere;
Or aëronaut descries and scorns outspread
On pigmy scale the enormous planisphere."
" Nay, nay," I cried,—"one streak of cinnabar,
One note of bird,—so waked the world for me!
O Life that listened, Love that called from far,
Man-heart that trembled at the bliss to be!
When earth's poor orb presaged the extremest star,—
Love from one drop divining all his sea."

POEMS

ODE TO NATURE

I

O MOTHER gravely mild,
Soul of the waste and wild,
Behold me compassed in thine icy calm!
Athirst, alone, again
I call thee and complain;—
Here in thy temple raise my solitary psalm.

II

Athirst;—yet not as though
Thy fountains of the snow
Could quench me, raving headlong from the hill;
Let other longings cease
With plenty and with peace;
Athirst to the end is he whom only love can fill.

III

The light loves blush and bloom;
They perish; they perfume
A flying hour, and make a slight hurt whole:
What more than this might be
Hath heaven revealed to me
In secret long ago, in sabbaths of the soul.

IV

When winds the Alpine horn,
More than itself reborn
Peals in the magic answer of the hill;
Afresh, afar, afloat,
A new majestic note
From other lips is blown, in other airs is still.

V

Such was the love I sought;
So to the hidden thought
Might flash the unspoken answer of the eyes;
No need of kiss or speech
When, each inmixt in each,
Thy heart in hers will call, and hers in thine replies.

VI

O hope too fond and fair!
O angel in the air!
O dying dream, which yet to dream was joy!
Prayed longest, followed most
Of all that heavenly host
Who lured from child to man the vision-haunted boy.

VII

Sometimes the flying flame
Was Fortune and was Fame;
Thro' cloudy rifts a wildering clarion rang;—
Oftener an Orphic crown,
From deep heaven fluttering down,
Lit on a poet's head, and sweet the poet sang.

VIII

But first and last and best,
Most longed-for, least confest,
One form unknown descended as a dove;
Low in my soul I heard
One new melodious word,
And all the boy's frame trembled at the touch of Love.

IX

They melt, they fail, they fade,
Those shapes in air arrayed,—
Love with the rest; ah, Love, the heavenly friend!
Only this Mother mild,
Guileless as unbeguiled,
Here in her holy place endureth to the end.

X

O fast and flying shroud!
Cold Horns that cleave the cloud!
Uplifted Silence unaware of man!
Softlier, ye torrents, flow!
Slide softly, thundering snow!
Let all in darkness end, as darkly all began!

XI

Hence, hence I too had birth,
One soul with the ancient Earth,
Beyond this human ancestry of pain:—
My soul was even as ye;—
She was,—and she would be;—
O Earth, and Night, and Nought, enfold her once again!

POEMS

LOVE AND DEATH

I

O PAINTER, match an English bloom,
And give the head an English air,
Then with great grey-blue stars illume
That face pathetically fair.

As though some sweet child, dowered at will
With all the wisdom years could send,
Looked up and, like a baby still,
Became thine equal and thy friend;

And kept the childly curves, and grew
To woman's shape in wondrous wise,
And with soft passion filled anew
The sea-like sapphire of her eyes.

Look on her, painter; is there aught
Of well-beloved that is not here?
Could chance or art be guessed or taught
To make the lovely child more dear?

And yet herself he sees not;—no,
To me alone the clue she gave;
My bird, so wounded, soaring so,
At once so tender and so brave.

He knows not through how stormy skies
My dove maintains her waveless way;—
To woe and wrong my child replies
With woman-glances, gently gay.

Ay, first the unconquerable heart
Electing through those eyes to shine,
Found in my soul the soul thou art
And, more than beauty, made me thine.

All human passions merged in one;—
The whole soul in one act set free;—
Mother for daughter, sire for son,
Feel faintlier what I feel for thee.

Here, take me; this is all; for us
Earth has no love unknown to know;
God, if a God have wrought it thus,
Surely shall always keep it so.

TO LADY MOUNT TEMPLE

STATE mixt with sweetness; all things chosen and fair
One aim subserving, swayed in one consent;
The fountain's glory with the sunshine's blent;
Silence, and Eden's spring-tide in the air;—
Yet 'mid all these a yearning guardian care
Continually on earth's waste places sent;
High hearts joy-brimmed, nor yet with joy content
Were aught unsoothed which saddest hearts may bear.—
Is this thine earthly house or heavenly goal,
Lady, which these poor words to paint have striven?
Nay, both; no vampires of the world control
That spirit's way to whom such wings are given;
The soul's own Prayer is answer for the soul;
Her Loves indwelling are her present Heaven.

ON A WINDOW IN DONINGTON CHURCH

" How blest, if they but knew it, how blest are they,
The husbandmen, for whom the months conspire,—
The springing seasons melt into the May,
The genial winter comes with feast and fire!"—
More blest God's labourers, who day by day
From holier husbandry nor turn nor tire,
On whose sweet shepherding has fallen alway
From heaven a satisfied and new desire.
All winter long their happy flocks they guide
Thro' pastures green, thro' vales that laugh and sing;
All winter long they pluck on every side
Fruit that endures and flowers not withering;
For fields like theirs each month is harvest-tide,
And for such sowers all the year is spring.

IAMQVE VALE

Dim in the moon wide-weltering Humber flowed;
Shone the rare lights on Humber's reaches low;
And *thou* wert waking where one lone light glowed
Whose love made all my bliss, whose woe my woe.
Borne as on Fate's own stream, from thine abode
I with that tide must journey sad and slow;
In that tall ship on Humber's heaving road
Dream for the night and with the morning go.

Yet thro' this lifelong dimness desolate,
O love, thy star within me fades not so;
On that lone light I gaze, and wondering wait
Since life we lost, if death be ours or no;
Yea, toward thee moving on the flood of Fate,
Dream for the night, but with the morn will go.

SLEEP

How greatly good to fall outspread
Full length at last upon my bed
  And bid the world farewell!
Without a sound, without a spark,
Immersed and drowned in pitchy dark
  And silence audible!

One living breath thro' the utter gloom,
Let pure Night's presence in the room
  Keep cool the voiceless hours:—
Black Night's inodorous airs austere,
More searching and more strongly dear
  Than Zephyr on the flowers!

Then from my wearied brain decay
The feverous fragments of the day,
  The thoughts that dance and die;
From life's exhausted cells they flow,
They throng and wander, whirl and go,
  And what is left am I.

There leave me softly to regain
The spent secretion of the brain
  From fountains darkly deep:
O come not! speak not! let me be,
Till from the heaven of heavens on me
  Descend the angel Sleep!

FEROR INGENTI CIRCUMDATA NOCTE

No sound or sight, no voice or vision came
  When that fulfilled itself which was to be,—
The crash that whelmed mine inner world in flame
  And rolled its rivers backward from the sea.
Nay, many a fjeld and fjord of ancient name
  Lay that long night without one sign for me;
Gudvangen, Vossevangen, slept the same,
  And dream was on the woods of Oiloë.

Yet surely once thou camest! and the whole
  Dark deep of heaven sighed thy tale to tell;
Lost like Eurydice's thy spirit stole
  Wildered between the forest and the fell;—
Only mine eyes were holden, and my soul
  Too roughly tuned to feel thy last farewell.

FROM ALFRED DE MUSSET

I HAVE lost my life, I have lost my strength,
And joy, and hope that lingered long,
And, losing all, have lost at length
The spirit and the pride of song.

How quickly spent a man's desire
Falls from the mistress of his youth!
And so I loved, and so I tire
Of my last mistress, ay, of Truth.

And yet she is immortal; they
Who, ere they know her, pass away,
Have wasted foolish years:
My God, Thy creature answers Thee;
One only good remains with me,—
The memory of tears.

Oh, when thro' all the crowd she came,
My child, my darling, glad and fair,
How seemed she like a flying flame
That parts at eve the dusk of air!
How leapt my heart, regarding there
Her ways in coming, softly fleet,
Her starry aspect, shining hair,
The light grace of her eager feet!

But when from those blue deeps divine
The tender glory quivering shone,
And her eyes' ardour met in mine
The love she loved to look upon;—
Then rainy mist or crowded floor
Became as heaven for her and me,
The London whirlwind, London roar,
As sighing of an enchanted sea.

O WAVING veil of shade and sun!
O dawns of dream and dew!
When life was high and heaven was one
With earth, and I with you!

When spring's primroses lit the wood,
Her hyacinths the glen,
And deep at heart we understood
The chief concerns of men:

For oft a fire from heaven will fall,
And oft the Soul replies,
And oft the unspoken Hope will call
From innocent blue eyes.

MADEIRA

How strangely on that haunted morn
Was from the West a vision born,
    Madeira from the blue!
Sweet Heavens! how fairy-like and fair
Those headlands shaped themselves in air,
    That magic mountain grew!

I clomb the hills; but where was gone
The illusion and the joy thereon,
    The glamour and the gleam?
My nameless need I hardly wist,
And missing knew not what I missed,
    Bewildered in a dream.

And then I found her; ah, and then
On amethystine glade and glen
    The soft light shone anew;
On windless labyrinths of pine,
Seaward, and past the grey sea-line,
    To isles beyond the view.

'Twas something pensive, 'twas a sense
Of solitude, of innocence,
    Of bliss that once had been;—
Interpretress of earth and skies,
She looked with visionary eyes
    The Spirit of the scene.

Oh not again, oh never more
I must assail the enchanted shore,
    Nor these regrets destroy,
Which still my hidden heart possess
With dreams too dear for mournfulness,
    Too vanishing for joy.

"FAERY LANDS FORLORN"

FROM Aalesund at midnight northward seen
Clear purple promontories fade in grey;
On Aalesund lies long the unearthly sheen
Of evening mixt with morning, day with day.
Ah, friend, beneath that heaven-high vault serene
What isles unnamed in gulfs unvoyaged lay!
How desolately calm those capes between
The slow wave swept the unending winding way!

Thence gazing awestruck in that pause of Fate,
My years, far from her, vision-like I viewed;
Unearthly calms, and hopes that wane and wait,
Life with one cold unchanging gleam imbued;—
Far firths of Sorrow spread disconsolate,
And Joy's low islets lit in solitude.

POEMS

SILVIA

I

From calm beyond our inmost thought
  Came the girl-spirit, childly-wise;
From spaces of the blue she brought
  This earnest candour of her eyes;
From heavenly fields her soul uprose,
  By fateful impulse urged to roam,—
Looked on the wheeling worlds, and chose
  Our love her magnet, Earth her home.

II

Awhile, awhile these years shall flow,
  In these soft limbs her soul be pent,
Till Earth the lore of love and woe
  Hath taught, and left her innocent:
Then fairer yet, then yet more dear
  We hold our child in surer stay;—
What else was Love that lit us *here*
  But glimmering dawn of deathless day?

TO ALICE'S PICTURE

UNCONSCIOUS child, fair pictured Phantasy!
More than thy song I from those lips have heard,
More than thy thought have guessed in look and word,
More than thyself mine eyes adore in thee!
Thou art the promise of Earth's joy to be,—
Days to our days by Fate how far preferred!
By stranger loveliness more softly stirred,
By purer passions taught tranquillity.

Nay, hoped I not thro' Death's swift-soaring ways
  Mine own poor self some glory unknown to know,—
If, slowly darkening from delightful days,
  I to mere night must gird myself and go,—
Then on thy face I should not dare to gaze
  For wild rebellion and for yearning woe.

I

"Soul, that in some high world hast made
Pre-natal unbewailing choice,
Thro' Earth's perplexities of shade
Sternly to suffer and rejoice;—
Breathe in me too thine ardent aim;
Let me too seek thy soaring goal:—
However severed, still the same
My hope with thine, O kindred Soul!

II

"Yet pause. The roaring North has driven
Beyond our ken his foamy car;
Serener than the height of heaven
This summer sea lies near and far;
And flecked with flying shade and shine
Heaves a dove-green, dove-purple breast,
And shimmers to the soft sky-line
Thro' faery solitudes of rest.

III

"No fruit has Ocean's tumult found;
His wave-battalions blindly ran;—
Hushed after all that storm and sound
Old Ocean ends as he began:—
On *thee* no random angers fell;
Oh, not for naught thy skies were wild!
Thine Angel marked them, measuring well
The storms that should not slay his child.

IV

"Thine eager youth they could not dim;
They left thee slender, left thee fair;
Left the soft life of voice and limb,
The blue, the gold, of eyes, of hair.
Within a sterner change they wrought,—
Beset thy Will with surging wrong,
Smote on the citadels of Thought,
And found thee ready, left thee strong.

V

"Thy worst is over. Pause and hark!
Thine inmost Angel whispers clear,
'We leave the blackness and the dark;
The end is Love, the end is near.'
Lift then anew the lessening weight;
Fight on, to men and angels dear!
Fare forth, brave soul, from fate to fate;—
Yet ah—one moment linger here!"

GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES

WOULD that a single sigh could fall
From lips so still so long,
Float o'er the sea and tell thee all,
More inwardly than song!

A breath enchanted and intense
From faint impassioned hours,
Hesperian with an odorous sense
Of Orotava's flowers!

On hair and eyes 'twould sink and rise,
Soft on thy lips would die,
And whisper in the speech of sighs,
"Oh wise one! thou and I!

"Not winds alone, my love, my own,
Not only sea disparts,
But Life and Fate, the loves too late,
The twin divided hearts.

"And day by day," the sigh would say,
With scarce surviving breath,
"Near and more near, a Form, a Fear:—
Oh darling, is it Death?"

WHEN in late twilight slowly thou hast strayed
Thro' wet syringas and a black-green shade,
With one communing so, that each with each
Knew not the interludes of ebbing speech,
Marked not the gaze which thro' the dimness fell
On beauty in the daylight loved so well:—
Since in that hour the still souls held as nought
The body's beauty or brain's responsive thought,
Content to feel that life in life had grown
Separate no longer, but one life alone;
Ay, and they guessed thereby what life shall be
When Love world-wide has shown his mystery.

SHE wears her body like a veil,
  And very life is shining through;
Her voice comes ringing on a gale
  Of spirit-passion wild and new;
O soul without a mate or name,
  Divine and mortal, maid and boy,
Shine out, and with a cry proclaim
  The unguessed infinity of joy!

And all is over; and again I stand,
O Love, alone on our remembered strand!
And hills and waters all the dreamy day
Melt each in each thro' silvery haze and grey,
And Jaman takes the sunset, Jura knows
Beyond the liquid plains the morning rose.

Lake of the lone, the exiled, the oppressed,
What sighs have wandered o'er thy sea-blue breast!
What gaze has watched the suns that could not save
Flame from thy hills and fade upon thy wave!
Great men and fallen upon thy shores have shed
Their few slow tears for fame and fortune fled;
Sad men and wise have been content to see
In thy cold calm their last felicity.
And now thy sunlit vault, these walls of thine,
Seem an unroofed and angel-haunted shrine,
Fair as my love, bright with her vanished bloom,
Stilled with her woe and sacred as her tomb.

For here she stood, and here she spoke, and there
Raised her soft look thro' the evening's crimsoned air;
And all she looked was lovely; all she said
Simple, and sweet, and full of tears unshed;
And my soul sprang to meet her, and I knew
Dimly the hope we twain were called unto.

IN THE WOLSEY CHAPEL, WINDSOR

PRINCE well-beloved! true heart and presence fair!
High o'er the marble of thy carved repose
From Windsor's keep the Flag of England blows;
A thousand years float in the storied air.
There sleeps thy Sire; and often gently there
Comes one who mourns with steadfast eyes, and strows
The rhododendron round thee and the rose;
Love is her silence and her look is prayer.

Nor now that Banner's broad-flung triumphings,
Nor spirit whispering to the sons of kings
Of strong continuance, age-long empery;—
But that one woman's gaze the promise brings
To thee that sleepest of eternal things,
Realms yet unreached, and high love still to be.

O ROCK and torrent, lake and hill,
Halls of a home austerely still,
  Remote and solemn view!
O valley, where the wanderer sees
Beyond that towering arch of trees
  Helvellyn and the blue!

Great Nature! on our love was shed
From thine abiding goodlihead
  Majestic fostering;
We wondered, half-afraid to own
In hardly-conscious hearts upgrown
  So infinite a thing.

Within, without, whate'er hath been,
In cosmic deeps the immortal scene
  Is mirrored, and shall last:—
Live the long looks, the woodland ways,
That twilight of enchanted days,—
  The imperishable Past.

WIND, MOON, AND TIDES

Look when the clouds are blowing
  And all the winds are free,
In fury of their going
  They fall upon the sea:
But though their blast is frantic
  And though the tempest raves
The deep immense Atlantic
  Is still beneath the waves.

Then while the Zephyrs tarry,
  Or when the frost is nigh,
The maiden none can marry
  Will beckon from the sky:—
Then with a wild commotion,
  Then with a rush and roar,
The whole enormous ocean
  Is flung upon the shore.

SOLOMON

STANDS the great king regarding as he stands
The bright perfected labour of his hands:
Then with no doubtful voice or trembling tone
Calls to the Presence he has made his own:
"All gold within and gilded
This house that I have builded,
It is ready for a king in his array:
Behind the curtain's hiding
The Highest is abiding;
We have found Him, He is with us from to-day."

But we grown wiser than the wise and made
For all our wisdom all the more afraid,—
Each man of each despairingly enquires
For God whom with despairing he desires:
"Have ye for all your duty
Beheld Him in His beauty?
Are there others who have known Him otherwhere?
The days around us darken,
He hears not nor will hearken,
He is gone into the infinite of air."

AND thou too knew'st her, friend! thy lot hath been
To watch her climb thro' walnut-shadows green,
List in the woodways her light step, and see
On the airy Alp those eyes of Arcady.

I need not fear, then, 'twas my heart alone
Forged an enchanting image of its own;—
That starlight on the upland lawns had shed
Illusive rays about her starry head;—
That from those shadowed lakes in soft sunrise
I had drawn the depth, the blueness of her eyes;—
And dream was all her look, and whispering stir
Of winds in pines was all the voice of her.

Ah, when thou knew'st her, was her face still gay
With that child-wonder of her early day?
So Lippi's maiden angels softly drawn
On vistas daisy-gemmed of dewy lawn,
Stand with fair feet and rosy and rounded bloom
By martyr's prison-house or Virgin's tomb;
Or, clasped in flying circlet, float and mix
Their lily-stems with thorn and crucifix;—
Yet on those sorrowing scenes their looks are bent
Half unconcerned, and with a still content;
Since souls are these that have not yet been born
To pain and passion of our earth forlorn,

Not yet have strayed from heaven, nor yet they know
The upbuilding strength of life and love and woe.
Thus heedless they their childly arts employ,
By their own being taught that the end is joy.

Then, when I last looked on her, her face was still
As one on earth, but past all earthly ill;
One whose last tear was wept, sighed her last sigh,
And dead already all that in *her* could die.

POEMS

A CHILD OF THE AGE

I

Oh for a voice that in a single song
Could quiver with the hopes and moan the fears
And speak the speechless secret of the years,
And rise, and sink, and at the last be strong!
O for a trumpet call to stir the throng
Of doubtful fighting-men, whose eyes and ears
Watch till a banner in the east appears
And the skies ring that have been still so long!
O age of mine, if one could tune for thee
A marching music out of this thy woe!
If one could climb upon a hill and see
Thy gates of promise on the plain below,
And gaze a minute on the bliss to be
And knowing it be satisfied to know!

II

I thought to stand alone upon a height
Above the waters where my kinsmen lie;
I seemed to hear a promise in the night,
I dreamed I saw a dawning in the sky:
I said, "For you, for you, with keener sight,
I watch till on the waves the dawn be nigh:"

I said, " While these men slumber, what delight
That we two should be waking, God and I ! "
Ah me ! the deathful waters climb and creep,
Far off the melancholy deep to deep
Murmurs a tidal infinite reply :
" Oh fool, oh foolish prodigal of sleep,
Remains, remains but with the waves to weep,
Or in the darkness with the dead to die."

WHAT heart with waiting broken
Shall speak the word unspoken,
And who by tears betoken
  The wisdom he has won?
Or say to him that grieveth,
"The hope thy soul believeth
Perchance, perchance, deceiveth,
  But other hope is none.

"Ay, deep beyond thy telling
A bitter fount is welling,
Far off a bell is knelling
  The ruin of thy youth:
Hide, hide the future's rising
With dreams and thin disguising,—
Can any man's devising
  Be sadder than the truth?"

Then I with hope undying
Will rise and make replying,—
Will answer to his sighing
  In speech that is a sigh:—
"The chains that fix and fetter,—
That chafe the soul and fret her,—
What man can know them better,
  O brother-men, than I?

"And yet—my burden bearing,
The Five Wounds ever wearing,
I too in my despairing
  Have seen Him as I say:
Gross darkness all around Him
Enwrapt Him and enwound Him,—
O late at night I found Him
  And lost Him in the day.

"But bolder grown and braver
At sight of One to save her,
My soul no more shall waver
  With wings no longer furled,
But, cut with one decision
From doubt and men's derision,
That sweet and vanished vision
  Shall follow thro' the world."

SUNRISE

Look, O blinded eyes and burning,
Think, O heart amazed with yearning,
Is it yet beyond thine earning,
That delight that was thy all?—
Wilful eyes and undiscerning,
Heart ashamed of bitter learning,
It is flown beyond returning,
It is lost beyond recall.

Who with prayers has overtaken
Those glad hours when he would waken
To the sound of branches shaken
By an early song and wild,—
When the golden leaves would flicker,
And the loving thoughts come thicker,
And the thrill of life beat quicker
In the sweet heart of the child?

Yet my soul, tho' Thou forsake her,
Shall adore Thee, till Thou take her,
In the morning, O my Maker,
For Thine Oriflamme unfurled:
For the lambs beneath their mothers,
For the bliss that is another's,
For the beauty of my brothers,
For the wonder of the world.

From above us and from under,
In the ocean and the thunder,
Thou preludest to the wonder
  Of the Paradise to be:
For a moment we may guess Thee
From Thy creatures that confess Thee
When the morn and even bless Thee,
  And thy smile is on the sea.

Then from something seen or heard,
Whether forests softly stirred,
Or the speaking of a word,
Or the singing of a bird,
  Cares and sorrows cease:
For a moment on the soul
Falls the rest that maketh whole,
  Falls the endless peace.

O the hush from earth's annoys!
O the heaven, O the joys
Such as priest and singing-boys
  Cannot sing or say!
There is no more pain and crying,
There is no more death and dying,
As for sorrow and for sighing,—
  These shall flee away.

Oh stars in heaven that fade and flame,
  Oh whispering waves below,
Was heaven or earth or I the same
  A year, a year ago?

The stars here kept their home on high,
  The waves their wonted flow,
The love is lost that once was I,
  A year, a year ago.

I wailed as one who scarce can be forgiven,
  But the good God had pity from afar,
And saw me desolate, and hung in heaven
    The signal of a star.

POEMS

BRIGHTON

I

HER brave sea-bulwarks builded strong
No tides uproot, no storms appal;
By sea-blown tamarisks the throng
Of idlers pace her broad sea-wall;
Rain-plashed the long-lit pavements gleam;
Still press the gay groups to and fro;
Dark midnight deepens; on they stream;
The wheels, the clattering horses go.

II

But that wave-limit close anear,
Which kissed at morn the children's play,
With dusk becomes a phantom fear,
Throws in the night a ghostly spray:—
O starless waste! remote despair!
Deep-weltering wildness, pulsing gloom!
As tho' the whole world's heart was there,
And all the whole world's heart a tomb.

III

Eternal sounds the waves' refrain;
"Eternal night,"—they moan and say,—
"Eternal peace, eternal pain,
Press close upon your dying day.
Who, who at once beyond the bound,
What world-worn soul will rise and flee,—
Leave the crude lights and clamorous sound,
And trust the darkness and the sea?'

HAROLD AT TWO YEARS OLD

OPEN your gates for him
  Eager and new!
All the world waits for him;
  What will he do?

Dear incompletenesses
  Blossoming hours!
Feed him with sweetnesses!
  Heap him with flowers!

See how he crumbles them,
  Shouts like a man!
Tosses and tumbles them
  Wide as he can!

Vain is admonishment,
  Sermons in vain;—
Gleeful astonishment!
  At it again!

Wildness of babyhood!
  Passion of play!
Who but a gaby would
  Wish it away?

Rapt from the Mystery,
  Reft from the whole,
Hast thou a history,
  Innocent soul!

Gaze we with wondering
  Baby, on thee;—
Sped o'er what sundering
  Strait of the sea?

Borne to us hitherward,
  Ah! from what shore?
Voyaging whitherward,
  Child, evermore?

Little he'll tell for us!
  Nothing he knows!
Clear like a bell for us
  Laughs as he goes!

Powers supersensible
  Breathe thro' the boy
Incomprehensible
  Promise of joy!

ASHRIDGE

On this great home if change must fall,
Let change itself come soft and fair;
Leave these cloud-feathery skies, and all
The abandonment of upland air;
Leave ancient forest, ancient lawn,
Historic ash-trees, beechen shade;
Still let the slanted shafts of dawn
Light the low fern from glade to glade.

No more the Churchmen, sad and slow,
Chaunt in dim dusk their crooning song;
Nor captive queen thro' lattice low
Views a wild realm of wrath and wrong:
To these Inheritors belong
A sure dominion, master art;
For moat and wall they choose the strong
Ascendant of the nobler heart.

And if sometimes that heart should quail,
Half doubtful of high task begun;
Beholding hallowed landmarks fail,
Dear hopes evanish one by one;—
Yet best shall lead who best have led;—
Those thro' our chaos surest steer
Whose fathers' bygone deeds have bred
Imperious Honour, flouting Fear.

"By her own strength can Virtue live?
Self-poised can Hope wide-winging soar?"
List! for our deepening age shall give
Some answer surer than of yore;—
Stand fast, high hearts, thro' woe and weal;
Watch thro' the night, if watch ye may;
Wait, till the rifted heavens reveal
Unheard-of morning, mystic day.

Not even in death thou diest; so strong to save
Is He who walked unharmed the stormy wave;
Thy life from earth by hurrying surges driven
Wakes unbewildered in the courts of heaven;
Youth's bloom is flown; youth's fairer fruit up-stored
Is ripening in the garden of the Lord.

LET each alone with timely thought
  Recall the days grown dim,
And ask those days whereby they brought
  His happiness to him;

He finds it was not in the set
  Delights resolved before,
Nor any eager wish, nor yet
  The wish fulfilled and more,

But dreams he scarcely will confess,
  And momentary play,
And unconsidered gleefulness
  That sprang beside the way.

I

Love, they said, is faint and dying;
Love, they said, is worn and old,—
Chained with custom, bought with gold;—
Hark! I heard his voice replying,
"Though ye flout him, what are ye?
Love is master; Love is free!"

II

Love, they said, not long will linger,—
Slights his chosen, leaves his own;—
Woe's the heart whence Love has flown,
Touched in spring with autumn's finger!
—Nay, your doubts have done him wrong,
Love is deathless, Love is strong!

III

Love can bind with lightest tether
Heart to heart and soul to soul;—
Nay, what law but Love's control
Links our life and death together?—
Perfect Love has banished fear;
Love is heaven, and Love is here!

FREDERIC TEMPLE

I

Is there one man in disenchanted days
  Who yet has feet on earth and head in heaven?
  One viceroy yet to whom his King has given
The fire that kindles and the strength that sways?
Is there a wisdom whose extremest ways
  Lead upward still? for us who most have striven,
  Made wise too early and too late forgiven,
Our prudence palsies and our seeing slays.
We are dying; is there one alive and whole,
A hammer of the Lord, a simple soul,
  Man with the men and with the boys a boy?
We are barren; let a male and conquering voice
Fill us and quicken us and make rejoice,
  Even us who have so long forgotton joy.

II

And as I prayed, I heard him; harshly clear
  Thrô' the full house the loud vibration ran,
And in my soul responded the austere
  And silent sympathy of man with man;

For as he spake I knew that God was near
  Perfecting still the immemorial plan,
And once in Jewry and for ever here
  Loves as He loved and ends what He began.
Wait, therefore, friends, rejoicing as ye wait
That 'mid faiths fallen and priests emasculate
  For men to follow such a man should be;
To whom the waves shall witness with a roar,
Wild Marazion and Tintagel's shore,
  And all the Cornish capes and Cornish sea.

IMMORTALITY

I

So when the old delight is born anew
  And God re-animates the early bliss
  Seems it not all as one first trembling kiss
Ere soul knew soul with whom she has to do?
"O nights how desolate, O days how few,
  O death in life, if life be this, be this!
  O weighed alone as one shall win or miss
The faint eternity which shines therethro'!
  Lo all that age is as a speck of sand
Lost on the long beach when the tides are free,
  And no man metes it in his hollow hand
Nor cares to ponder it, how small it be;
  At ebb it lies forgotten on the land
And at full tide forgotten in the sea."

II

Yet in my hid soul must a voice reply
  Which knows not which may seem the viler gain,
  To sleep for ever or be born again,
The blank repose or drear eternity.

A solitary thing it were to die
So late begotten and so early slain,
With sweet life withered to a passing pain,
Till nothing anywhere should still be I.
Yet if for evermore I must convey
These weary senses thro' an endless day
And gaze on God with these exhausted eyes,
I fear that howsoe'er the seraphs play
My life shall not be theirs nor I as they,
But homeless in the heart of Paradise.

POEMS

PALLIDA MORTE FUTURA

I

THIS is not shame in her courageous eyes,
  Nor on those lids the glitter of a tear,—
Nay, but a rapt seclusion of surprise
  After such woe to find an end so near:—
How lorn in heaven the hurrying winds arise!
  How black the slow waves sway upon the pier!
On the edge of death her haunting memory flies,
  And the utmost marvel has not place for fear.
O waves that ebb, O shadowy airs that err,
With you she speaks, with you she would confer,
  Demanding dumbly what it is to die:
Yet hush ye winds, nor let the billows stir,
I with a single look shall answer her,
  For death knows death and what she is am I.

II

For even so forlorn and so forsaken,
  So shut and severed from all homes that are,
While in the vault the auroral glories waken,
  False flames, and dying ere the morning star,

My soul in solitude her post has taken,
  Between the two seas, on the narrowing bar,—
Sees on each hand the stormful waters shaken,
  The twin Eternities unite afar.
There 'mid faiths slain and idols shattered low,
And many a fallen friend and fallen foe,
  She waits by night the flooding tides to be;
And only to herself, and hushed, and slow,
Makes hidden melodies and wails her woe,
  Till roar meet roar and sea be mixt with sea.

FROM BRUTE TO MAN

THROUGH such fierce hours thy brute forefather won
Thy mounting hope, the adventure of the son:
Such pains astir his glooming heart within
That nameless Creature wandered from his kin;
Smote his broad breast, and, when the woods had rung
To bellowing preludes of that thunderous tongue,
With hopes half-born, with burning tears unshed,
Bowed low his terrible and lonely head;
With arms uncouth, with knees that scarce could
kneel,
Upraised his speechless ultimate appeal;—
Ay, and heaven heard, and was with him, and gave
The gift that made him master and not slave;
Even in that stress and horror of his fate
His thronging cry came half articulate,
And some strange light, past knowing, past control,
Rose in his eyes, and shone, and was a soul.

POEMS

A COSMIC HISTORY[1]

COME then, poor worm at war with Fate,—
(What inward Voice spake stern and low?)
Come, paltry Life importunate,
Enough of truth thou too shalt know;
Since man's self-stirred out-reaching thought
Hath seen in vision sights of awe;
Hath from a darker Sinai brought
Damnations of a vaster Law.

From dust, they told thee, man was born?—
The Cosmos' self from dust began,
In days that knew not eve nor morn,
Nor brooding Spirit nor breathing man;
See first-begot from Nought and Night
The gathering swarms, the flamy gale!
That cold, that low, that fitful light
Showed in the void an iron hail.

[1] On the hypothesis here illustrated, the gradual aggregation of cosmic dust (practically known to us in the shape of meteoric stones and iron) forms comets and nebulæ; the nebula of our solar system becomes a sun and planets; life appears on the cooling planets; and they are ultimately merged again in the sun. Higher beings than man are evolved elsewhere, presumably on large and slowly-cooling orbs; but although we men may imagine such beings as divine, they themselves recognise their powerlessness in face of a universe which is as inscrutable to them as to us. The suns of our stellar system crash together, evolve heat, and repeat the cosmic process; but ultimately lose heat into space and are agglomerated into one cold and dark mass, from which the last life disappears. A night of indefinite duration sets in—such as that imagined by Hindoo cosmogonists between successive self-manifestations of the universe; and in this night the cosmic dust alone is conceived as still speeding through infinite space.

Then lone in space the comet hung;
  Then waxed the whorls of cloudy glow;
Then each on other swept and swung
  Enormous eddies, formless flow;
One Law, one Force and manifold,
  Bestrewed high heaven with sparkling fire,
Burned in Orion's belt of gold,
  And lit the Dragon and the Lyre.

Cooled the great orbs, and whirling flew
  Their planet-offspring outward thrown;
On wheeling planets strangely blew
  A breath unbidden and unknown;
No Mind creating watched alone,
  Nor bade the emergent minds begin;
To weltering waters, senseless stone,
  The seed of Life had entered in.

And first a glimmering ease they had,
  And creatures bound in dream benign,
Obscurely sentient, blindly glad,
  Felt the dim lust of shower and shine;
Then works the unresting Power, and lo!
  In subtler chain those germs combine,
Thro' age-long struggle shaping slow
  This trembling Self, this Soul of thine.

Rash striving into sad estate!
  From anguished brutes the plaint began,
Sighed in man's soul articulate,
  And breathes from Beings more than man;—

Ye have called them good, ye have called them great,
  But whom have these for hope or prayer?
Nay, with what cry their end await
  But silence and a God's despair?

Ye have called them gods, ye have called them kings;—
  Too well their impotence they know,
Forth-gazing on the waste of things
  With stern philosophies of woe:
Isled in their Sirius, Titan-strong,
  They watch his warmth how slowly fail;
He fades, he freezes; long and long
  Drives on the dead the iron hail.

Then all is silence; all in one
  The exhausted orbs have crashed and sped;
Cold to the core is every sun,
  And every heart that loved is dead:
The Night of Brahm lies deep and far,
  The Night of Brahm, the enduring gloom;
One black, one solitary star,
  The Cosmos is the cosmic tomb.

Nor yet thereby one whit destroyed,
  Nor less for all that life's decay,
Thro' the utter darkness, utter void,
  Sweeps the wild storm its ancient way:
Still fresh the stones on stones are hurled;
  Their soulless armies shall not fail;—
Beyond the dooms of world and world
  Drives in the night the iron hail.

POEMS

A COSMIC OUTLOOK

I

Backward!—beyond this momentary woe!—
Thine was the world's dim dawn, the prime emprize;
Eternal æons gaze thro' these sad eyes,
And all the empyreal sphere hath shaped thee so.
Nay! all is living, all is plain to know!
This rock has drunk the ray from ancient skies;
Strike! and the sheen of that remote sunrise
Gleams in the marble's unforgetful glow.
Thus hath the cosmic light endured the same
Ere first that ray from Sun to Sirius flew;
Ay, and in heaven I heard the mystic Name
Sound, and a breathing of the Spirit blew;
Lit the long Past, bade shine the slumbering flame
And all the Cosmorama blaze anew.

II

Onward! thro' baffled hope, thro' bootless prayer,
With strength that sinks, with high task half begun,
Things great desired, things lamentable done,
Vows writ in water, blows that beat the air.
On! I have guessed the end; the end is fair.

Not with these weak limbs is thy last race run ;
Not all thy vision sets with this low sun ;
Not all thy spirit swoons in this despair.
Look how thine own soul, throned where all is well,
Smiles to regard thy days disconsolate ;
Yea ; since herself she wove the worldly spell,
Doomed thee for lofty gain to low estate ;—
Sown with thy fall a seed of glory fell ;
Thy heaven is in thee, and thy will thy fate.

III

Inward ! ay, deeper far than love or scorn,
Deeper than bloom of virtue, stain of sin,
Rend thou the veil and pass alone within,
Stand naked there and feel thyself forlorn !
Nay ! in what world, then, Spirit, wast thou born ?
Or to what World-Soul art thou entered in ?
Feel the Self fade, feel the great life begin,
With Love re-rising in the cosmic morn.
The inward ardour yearns to the inmost goal ;
The endless goal is one with the endless way ;
From every gulf the tides of Being roll,
From every zenith burns the indwelling day ;
And life in Life has drowned thee and soul in Soul ;
And these are God, and thou thyself art they.

POEMS

TO THE QUEEN

I

To her beneath whose stedfast star
From pole to pole in lusty play,
Her English wander, forcing far
Their world-ingathering way;—
Outsoar the Cæsar's eagle flight,
Outrun the Macedonian reign,
Flash from the flamy Northern night
Speech to the Austral main;—

II

To her whose patient eyes have seen
Man's knowledge wax thro' ebb and flow,
Till some have felt these bars between
Wind of the Spirit blow;—
Tho' some, heart-worn with doubt and strife
Would bid the doomful thunder fall,
Bind as with bands the cosmic Life,
And dream the end of all:—

III

Beyond, beyond their wisdom's bound
Thro' fairer realms the Queen shall roam,
Till soul with soul the Wife hath found
Her mystic-wedded home:—
While her long-rumoured glories stir
The blue tide's earth-engirdling wave,
With love, with life, her Prince and her
The All-Father shield and save!

January 1898.

POEMS

CENTENARY POEM

[This poem on Burns was written at the age of fifteen.—Ed.]

I

He passed, our wonder, our regret;
Two generations since have yielded breath,
But bright remembrance glows among us yet,
And glory broadens from the plunge of death.
So sure a fame the sacred poet waits,
That though unreverenced he cross the gates
Which bar the realms of action and of doom;
He murmurs not, content to see
His praise beyond obscurity,
His glory out of gloom;
Nor fitly charges equal fate, but knows
That through conjectured ages far to be,
Meet honour fails not from his tomb, but grows
To plenitude with just posterity.

II

So is it with that memory we set
More fair than any fame to Scotsmen yet;
For neither passed he in mid storm of praise,
As Romulus in thunder, from the throng,
Nor led in honoured ease melodious days,
And from his fulness shook the land with song:
But through stern toil of unrejoicing youth
He reared a spirit open-eyed to truth,

Nor baser ever through calamity,
  But keen from deepening care to see
The broad world glad in good, and misery
  Prelude and germ of fair eternity.

III

No station his of wealth or honoured birth,
No fame ancestral whence to stir the earth,
  Nought save his manhood and high work;
  So truth arose in peasant mind
    Wherewith all freedom rings,
  Of force to scatter to the wind
    False pride which station brings;
"Man's exaltation is not that he rules,
Nor can accrue just honour unto fools;
    The good is noblest of his kind,
    The poet more than kings."

IV

Therefore his people glories in his birth,
  And under many a morn his name is great.
And we from many a realm of earth
      His honour celebrate
Who forced not song for petty praise,
  Nor in feigned passion raved for sympathy,
      But lightened into earnest lays,
        In truth and rare simplicity;
      And knowing man to man is kin,
        Sang loud to brothers far and near,
      And stood in strength that rose within
        Unwarped by praise, unchecked by fear.

V

O silent shapes athwart the darkening sky!
  Magnificence of many-folded hills,
Where the dead mist hangs and the lone hawks cry,
  Seamed with the white fall of a thousand rills;
O lucid lakes! serene from shore to shore,
  With promontories set of solemn pines,
Broad mirrors which the pale stars tremble o'er,
  Deep-drawn among the misty mountain lines;
O holy hearths, intemerate of crime!
  O tale of martyrs by the flickering sod!
O righteous race, in stedfast toil sublime!
  O noblest poem, "Let us worship God!"
    Ye taught him, shaping truthful days;
      Of you he told to men, for he
    From wayside reeds sweet tone could raise
      More dear than full accord of symphony,
Knowing that whatsoe'er the poet sings,
  Of prototyped in nature or in man,
Moves deeply, though it touch not wrath of kings
      Or frantic battle-van.

VI

    But most intent the people hears,
      Tranced to silence, thrilled to tears,
    When the joys of love and fears
      Fall in music on their ears;
    Stirring noble sympathies,
      Waking hope and high desire,
    And, to introspective eyes,
      Granting glimpse of Heaven's fire.

VII

Nor scorns he such delight, whose heart and eye
Are tempered to the truth of poesy,
Nor following baser natures, would degrade
Aught from that honour which the Eternal made;
Nor ranks this frame the soul's offence,
Nor lovely form the slave of sense;
But knowing good is beauty, hath believed
Beauty is also good, nor oft deceived;
Yea, such a surge of life his pulses fills,
And so abounding passion through him thrills,
That with fierce cries for sympathy,
With longing and with agony,
The glory of his thought goes forth to greet
All fair, though unregarding, he shall meet,
And oft with price the mean endues,
The ignoble holds for rare;
And wooing bright imagined hues
A phantom loveliness pursues,
But knows too late an equal otherwhere.

VIII

So in deep ambrosial night
Falls a star from heaven's height;
Mad for earth, a sliding spark
Down the deadness of the dark,
Falleth, findeth his desire,
Loseth his celestial fire,

Quenched to iron, like his love,
For her face is fair above;
But within her heart is stone,
Adamant and chalcedon.

IX

But he for whom three peoples mourn,
On many a breeze of madness borne,
At many a fancied loss forlorn,
Yet soon as stedfast will began,
And life through firmer manhood ran,
To one prime passion nobly true,
In bliss, but most in sorrow, knew
A woman's perfect love, best boon to man.

X

So lived he, fearing God; his ways
Were dim with penury, uncheered of praise;
Yet not without a noble work begun—
One cry for truth against the might of wrong;
One bolt from thunder-volleys hurled,
On that grim prince who rules the world,
The bright defiance of a lightning song;
O not without a noble work begun,
Failed he in sorrow from the sun,
Fared he to tell the deeds that he had done,
Leaving his people, to the latest days,
A heritage of unforgotten lays.

XI

But nearer aye the hounds of Ruin bayed,
And Error was upon him, that he strayed,
And close at heart remorseful Phrensy preyed,
And pitiless Disaster ran him down;
Till mute Death took him, weary, undismayed,
And calm in hallowed earth his bones were laid;
His the toil, be his the crown!
O great heart by low passions swayed!
O high soul by base cares assayed!
O silence, silence, never to be broken,
Till some dread word from the white throne be spoken!

XII

Ah! yet we trust he findeth end to ill,
Nor in deep peace remembereth misery,
Who in the heart of his loved land is still,
Between the mountains and the clamorous sea.
There all night the deeps are loud,
Billow far to billow roaring,
But he, sleeping in his shroud,
Heareth not the waters pouring.
Yea, though the sun shall wheel a splendrous form
Unseen, above the dim cloud-cataract,
Though lightnings glimmer to the rainy tract,
And all the land be wan with storm,
He knows not, wont of old to see,
In high thought severed from his kind,
Beyond the wrack Divinity,
Jehovah on the wind.

XIII

O story sadder than dethronèd kings—
A poet lost to earth!
Yea, though his land in plenty sings,
Forgetful of her dearth,
And though his people in just laws is great,
And willing fealty to an equal state,
And though her commerce on all ocean thrives,
And every province swarms with happy lives,
Yet weep the great heart hidden in the sod;
All else to man through faithful toil arrives—
The poet straight from God.

STANZAS ON
MR. WATTS' COLLECTED WORKS

"Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place."

I

For many a year the master wrought,
And wisdom deepened slow with years;
Guest-chambers of his inmost thought
Were filled with shapes too stern for tears;—
Yet joy was there, and murmuring Love,
And Youth that hears with hastened breath,
But, throned in peace all these above,
The unrevealing eyes of Death.

II

Faces there were which won him yet,
Fair daughters of an iron age:
In iron truth portrayed he set
Warrior and statesman, bard and sage.
From hidden deeps their past he drew,
The ancestral bent of stock and stem;
More of their hearts than yet they knew
Thro' their own gaze looked out on them.

III

Yet oftenest in the past he walked,
With god or hero long gone by,
Oft, like his pictured Genius, talked
With rainbow forms that span the sky:
Thereto his soul hath listed long,
When silent voices spake in air,—
Hath mirrored many an old-world song
Remote and mystic, sad and fair.

IV

For here the Thracian, vainly wise,
Close on the light his love has led;—
Oh hearken! her melodious cries
Fade in the mutter of the dead:—
"Farewell! from thy embrace I pass,
Drawn to the formless dark alone:
I stretch my hands,—too weak, alas!
And I no more, no more thine own."

V

And here is she whom Art aflame
Smote from the rock a breathing maid;
Calm at the fiery call she came,
Looked on her lover unafraid;
Nor quite was sure if life were best,
And love, till love with life had flown,
Or still with things unborn to rest,
Ideal beauty, changeless stone.

VI

Ah! which the sweeter? She who stands,
A soul to woe that moment born,—
Regretfully her aimless hands
Drooping by Psyche's side forlorn?—
Woke with a shock the god unknown,
And sighing flushed, and flying sighed:
Grey in the dawning stands alone
His desolate and childly bride.

VII

Or she whose soft limbs swiftly sped,
The touch of very gods must shun,
And, drowned in many a boscage, fled
The imperious kisses of the sun?
Mix, mix with Daphne, branch and frond,
O laurel-wildness, laurel-shade!
Let Nature's life,—no love beyond,—
Make all the marriage of the maid!

VIII

Or she who, deep in Latmian trees,
Stoops from the height her silver sheen?
Dreams in a dream her shepherd sees
The crescent car, the bending queen.
One kiss she gives; the Fates refuse
A closer bond or longer stay:
The boy sleeps still; her orb renews
Its echoless unmated way.

IX

All these some hope unanswered know,
Some laws that prison, fates that bar;
Baffled their spirit-fountains flow
Towards things diviner and afar.
Such dole at heart their painter felt,
Within, without, such sights to see;
Who in our monstrous London dwelt,
And half remembered Arcady.

X

Ah, sure, those springs of joy and pain
By some remote recall are stirred;
His ancient guardians smile again,
And touch a colour, speak a word.
Not all asleep thy gods of Greece
Lie tumbled on the Coan shore:—
O painter! thou that knew'st their peace
Must half remember evermore!

XI

So gazed on Phidias' warrior-maid,
Methinks, Ægina's kingly boy:—
She stood, her Gorgon shield displayed,
Too great for love, too grave for joy.
All day her image held him there;
This world, this life, with day grew dim;
Some glimmering of the Primal Fair
Pre-natal memories woke in him.

XII

Then as he walked, like one who dreamed,
  Thro' silent highways silver-hoar,
More wonderful that city seemed,
  And he diviner than before:—
A voice was calling, All is well;
  Clear in the vault Selene shone,
And over Plato's homestead fell
  The shadow of the Parthenon.

THE SAINT

And one there was whose face was softly set
To find the light which lighteneth from above,
Who in all anguish never should forget
The dear face of his love:
Nay, nor that hour, instinct with holy fear,
What time, but not with sleep, his eyes were dim,
While in the dead night, till the dawn was near,
She fought with God for him.
Yet how by thought her presence to renew?
What pale reflection of the glory fled?
To whom can I compare her? whereunto
Shall she be likened?

With such a look methinks in such a prayer,
On sacred walls the sweet Sebastian stands,
To cruel arrows offering his bare
White breast and holy hands:
Or so with earnest eyes and brow serene,
By some great painter grandly pictured,
S. Roderic the Martyr waits between
The living and the dead.
Yea, ere his feet have fallen or eye be dim
Stands the death-smitten saint, his service done:
And high from heaven an angel holds to him
The crown which he has won.

Or such a spirit theirs, nor yet forgot,
Of whom in simple speech their legends tell
That those weak virgins also chose their lot
In evil ages well:
Who in stern oath had terribly decreed,
If by all effort anywise they can,
With leaguered enterprise to intercede
For fallen fates of man:
Nor ever for a moment found they rest,
Nor sank at any time from fierce desire,
Not ever failed from some consuming breast
The flame of sacred fire:

But whether solemn chaunt they celebrate
To Father and to Son and Holy Ghost,
Or silently with settled eyes await
The showing of the Host:
Or whether sacred service of the dead
In mindful music carefully they keep,
Or haply on their eyes hath lightened
The short repose of sleep:
Always in sure succession night and day
Uplifting tireless hands before the throne,
One woman, strongly confident to pray,
Besought the Lord alone.

And one wail trembled thro' the holy trance,
And the same sigh thro' that enduring prayer:
"Have pity, O God! on Thine inheritance,
Christ my Redeemer, spare!"

Behold she prayeth: and the crimson beams
Of sad declining day have vanished soon,
And coldly clearly thro' the casement streams
The silence of the moon:
And sometimes ere the watch be wholly done
Her spirit swooneth for a little space,
And sometimes in her agony the nun
Hath fallen upon her face:

Yea, when the sense of earth is rapt and gone,—
No dream nor vision nor spirit nor any ghost,
A solemn Presence seems to light upon
The wafer of the Host.
Then surely from her trance she would not fall
Were bolts on thunderbolts about her hurled,
Nor in her ecstasy would heed at all
The blazing of the world:
But when the last, the day of days, shall come
And by strange hosts the space of air is trod,
And Christ the Lord descends to gather home
His saints, elect of God:
Then shalt Thou find that woman waiting there,
And with Thine own hands wake her wonderfully,
And lift her from her last most precious prayer
To Thee, my God, to Thee.

I KNEW a man in early days
Whom now I will not blame nor praise,
So dark his life, so foul his sin,
But such a human heart within.
Hard words to him I often said,
And would have killed, if words could kill,
But none the less, alive and dead,
I loved him, and I love him still.

OH fair and fleet with eager feet
The Greek his races ran,
Nor lost the boy his early joy
But triumphed into man:
Then tall and wise with graver eyes
He sought around, above,
Above, around, he sought and found
No sweeter thing than love.

O BEAR it, bear it, lonely heart,
As men have borne before;
A little while alive thou art,
And then shalt ache no more.

Behold I bear it as I may,
Mine eyes refuse me tears,
I suffer in a single day
The misery of years.

Down the deep vale, as one who dreamed,
Thro' the dim dusk I ran;
And strangely to myself I seemed
A God-forsaken man.

No human voice the valley knows,
No trump that calls the kine,
But thunder of the sliding snows
And silence of the pine.

So many vows, so many sighs,
So great delight forgot!
O answer, sweet accustomed eyes,—
Alas, they answered not.

O friend who hearest, hast thou known
The death that love can die?
And hast thou once been not alone,
And then alone as I?

In that still home, while Tyne went murmuring by
The old man's days were confident and calm,
Like organ-notes that close melodiously
The marches of a psalm.

Yet to the end it pleased him to dispense
The gathered harvest of a long increase,
From his wise words, benign intelligence,
And from his presence, peace.

And sometimes on his brow would seem to be
The hint and dawn of an immortal grace,
And some impalpable expectancy
Would settle in his face:

So standeth one by night whose purgèd ears
Hark for a secret which the stars shall tell,
So hears the wondering child, or scarcely hears,
The sighing of the shell.

O show us the arousal and uprise
Which crowns and pays the waiting of the past!
O Father, tell us if those wistful eyes
Are satisfied at last!

"They on the Lord that wait," He answereth,
"As mounting eagles shall their strength renew,
How safe the souls whom God encompasseth!
Their wants are very few."

NAY, would'st thou know her? let thine hid heart declare
Thine own most loved, most fair;
Call the dear dream, and from thy best divine
Dimly that best of mine;
List the still voice when votive Memory sings
Untold and holy things.
Remember how she looked that very day
Which stole thy soul away;
Think in her soft eyes what a glory grew
When love's first word was new.
Ah, friend, and was she lovely? seemed she then
The light and life of men?
Seemed she a creature from high heaven come down
For thine eternal crown?
Nay, canst thou feel it surely and know it well,
Without her heaven were hell,
And her one heart, whate'er God's heaven may be,
Were heaven enough for thee?

Friend, if such life hath beat thy breast within,
We have loved, we are akin.

POEMS

THE GENESIS OF A MISSIONARY

Stung with the sharp pang of that evil day,
  Too short occasion did all life afford,
If anywise at last he should repay
    A white soul to the Lord.

Thenceforth to labour, strong in stedfast zeal
  And faithful furtherance of a mighty plan,
In noble language labour to reveal
    His Maker unto man:

"I with great violence have entered in,
  Storm ye with force the golden gates of heaven:
Oh freed from agony! oh safe from sin!
    I also am forgiven!"

Therefore on many a coast his cry was heard,
  On many ears that earnest warning broke,
Yea, with his utterance he strangely stirred
    The hearts of many folk:

Fast chained he kept them in divine surprise,
  Deep things of God he wisely spake and well;
Strange glory on his face, but in his eyes
    The memory of Hell.

ÉCHOS DU TEMPS PASSÉ

I

"Oh hush," I cried, "that thrilling voice,
That shepherd's plaint no more prolong,
Nor bid those happy loves rejoice
Thro' feigned rusticities of song!
Too soft a passion through thee sings,
Too yearning-sweet the phrases flow;
Too deep that music strikes, and brings
The tears of long ago.

II

"Ah! let me keep my frozen peace,
Forget with years the ardent boy,
And face the waking world, and cease
To dream of passion, dream of joy!
And yet this heart how strangely yearned!
How seemed the dream more true than day!
What flame was that which through me burned,
And burns, and fades away?"

III

But she, whose young blood softly stirred
Had bid the unconscious maiden sing,
Heart-whole, and simply as a bird
That feels the onset of the spring,—
She from mine eyes their secret drew,
Learnt from my lips the lover's tone,
And in my soul's confusion knew
The impulse of her own.

IV

Who is herself my vision's truth,
  Herself my heart's unknown desire,
Herself the hope that led my youth
  With counterchange of cloud and fire;—
Then let her sing as Love has willed
  Of mimic loves that die in air,—
A deeper strain my soul has filled,
    Herself the music there.

A WHITE WITCH

I

Eyes that the morning star outshine,
Veiled with their arching shade!
Eyes from whose amorous deeps divine
Looks forth a stainless maid!
Eyes that the painter's art in vain
Erewhile had burnt upon my brain,—
No longer look on mine, or nevermore refrain!

II

Turn, turn that lustrous gaze away,
Enchantress innocent!
No angers in those lightnings play,
No willing bolts are sent;—
All childly-free those glances fly,—
Nor yet the less must droop and die
The heart lost unaware, and won unconsciously.

IN HENRY VII.'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

O HOLY heart of England! inmost shrine
Of Mary's grace divine;
Proud aisles, where all things noble, all things high,
Her sweet soul magnify;
Vaults where the bones of mighty kings are laid,
Blest by a Mother-Maid!
One heart, great shrine, thou knewest then, be sure,
As thine own Mistress pure;
Eyes that like hers by supplication bless,
And reign by lowliness.
Oh solemn hour, and on Love's altar sent
Sun-fire for sacrament,
When in the age-old answers she and I
Made each to each reply;—
Ay, for a moment rose and were alone
With Him Who was our own,
While wide on earth heaven's height made luminous
Shone, and the Lord on us.
O Priest, whose voice from that irradiant sun
Proclaimed the twain made one,—
Amid the banners of his Order spake
That oath no age shall break!

Voice of a Ruler born to soothe and sway
Man on his wandering way,
Dowered with the courage glad, the wisdom mild,
Which keep the sage a child;
Whose high thoughts immanent have built him fair
A shrine in the upper air
Stainless and still, and ever oftener trod
By messengers of God!
While to that voice amid those memories heard
Answered her underword,
No wonder if the Eternal Presence then
Seemed mute no more to men,
Nor gulf betwixt, nor any darkness shed
On souls miscalled the dead;
Since we and they, henceforth or long ago,
One life alone can know;
Since from seas under earth to stars above
There is no joy but love,
Nor in God's house shall any glory be,
Save God and such as she.

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